

A photograph of a modern synagogue interior, viewed from the back of the sanctuary looking towards the front. The ceiling is a prominent feature, consisting of a series of overlapping, curved, ribbed structures that create a sense of depth and height. The walls are light-colored and feature large, arched windows. The floor is dark, and rows of wooden pews are arranged on either side of a central aisle. The overall atmosphere is serene and architectural.

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- A - Abraham Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy* (New York: Henry Holt), 1932: 244.
- B - Samuel Rosenbaum, "Congregational Singing"; *Proceedings of the Cantors Assembly Convention* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary), February 22, 1949: 9-11.

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FROM THE EDITOR

The Issue of Sacred Space—Its Relation to Sacred Time4

VARIED ASPECTS OF SACRED SPACE

Creating Sacred Space

Livia Straus9

Liturgy and the Remains of the Dura Europos Synagogue Building: How Did it Function as a Religious Space?

Steven Fine 20

Music from a Confined Space: Salomone Rossi’s *Ha-shirim asher lishlomoh* (1622/23) and the Manutua Ghetto

Stefano Patuzzi 49

Sanctifying Two-Dimensional Space: The Avodah of Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction

David Greenstein.....70

Music in a Sacred Place: Towards Understanding the Herodian Temple’s Acoustics

Joseph A. Levine 89

***Yofi u-k’dushah*: The Role of the Aesthetic in the Realm of the Holy**

Diane Cover & Saul Wachs 113

Aranging Two-Dimensional Space for Liturgical Use—Typography in a Bilingual Siddur

Simon Prais..... 122

The Shell and the Pearl: Form and Function in Synagogue Architecture

Gideon Ofrat139

The “Spaciousness” of Ernest Bloch’s *Avodath Hakodesh*
Albert Weisser 150

Designing Outdoor Space Structurally
Uzzi Elmaleh 153

A LITERARY GLIMPSE

Now From this Place
Charles Davidson 155

POTPOURRI

**Hugo Weisgall (1912—1997)—Centennial Appreciation
of a Jewish Modernist**
Emily Wigod Pincus 158

Tales from the Choir Loft: A “Vimalei Boy” Remembers
Solomon Mendelson 165

Roman Cycowski (1900-1998)—A Hazzan Remembered
Julius Blackman and Robert S. Scherr 169

Secular Jewish Music Expression—Is Nothing Sacred?
Hankus Netsky 173

**Crazy Jane Talks with the Rabbis: Pedagogy and Privacy
in Liturgy**
Catherine Madsen 187

D’VAR K’RIAH

Penitential Trop and the Fishwife
By Victor Tunkel 195

MAIL BOX

Re: Sulzer and Minkowsky
Akiva Zimmerman 203

REVIEWS

The Rabbinical Assembly's <i>Mahzor Lev Shalem</i> Ruth Langer	205
Charles Davidson's <i>Sefer Hadrakhah</i> Sholom Kalib	214
Geoffrey Shisler's <i>Shiru Lo Shir Chadash</i> Sam Weiss	245
Joey Weisenberger's <i>Building Singing Communities</i> Shoshana Brown	248
Jack Gottlieb's <i>Funny, It Doesn't Sound Jewish: How Yiddish Songs and Synagogue Melodies Influenced Tin Pan Alley, Broadway, and Hollywood</i> Judith Pinnolis	251
Michael Gerber's <i>Jazz Jews</i> Jeffrey Nussbaum	255
Two OR-TAV Publications in the Klezmer Department: Yale Strom's <i>Dave Tarras—The King of Klezmer</i>; Emil Kroitor's <i>Klezmer Solos, Duets & Trios</i> Jack Kessler	258

MUSIC

<i>A Cappella Settings that Create an Aura of Openness</i>	
<i>Hal'lu</i> (Heard from Berele Chagy)	262
<i>Eits hayyim</i> (Abba Weigal, after Yugoslavian folk tune)	263
<i>Kaddish shaleim</i> (Arthur Yolkoff)	265
<i>Ya'aleh</i> (Sholom Katz, after Roumanian <i>Doina</i>)	269
<i>Yih'yu l'ratson</i> (Western Sephardic)	271



The Issue of Sacred Space—Its Relation to Sacred Time

Ritual... connects the transitory present moment and the confined space to the eternal and the cosmic.¹

Gunther Plaut, Emeritus Rabbi of Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto, once recalled that his lifelong practice of beginning worship by directing the congregation's attention elsewhere, was in line with accepted practice in other religions as well. He was thinking, perhaps, of the old chorale about God being "Deep, Incomprehensible, without Beginning," that Armenians sing at the foot of their church altar while the priest is being vested in the sacristy; by the time the priest enters, worshipers are already singing the service—without even realizing it. Rabbi Plaut told me that he'd first experienced how that worked while a young novice at Berlin's Oranienburgerstrasse Temple. His senior rabbi had wordlessly stepped forward and thrown open the Ark doors. The congregation rose instinctively and Lewandowsky's setting of the hymn *Mah Tovu* thundered forth simultaneously from choir and organ in such tremendous volume that it almost knocked Plaut off his feet just as he had managed to scramble upright.²

Hearing him relate the incident confirmed a long-held suspicion of mine: no matter in which religious tradition a service takes place, its most critical moment is always the opening or *introit* (from the Old French: "entrance"). An introit serves the same purpose as a poetic invocation: to give the impression of *beginning in the midst of things*. Homer's Goddess sang of Achilles' anger ten years into the war against Ilion; Milton's Heavenly Muse justified God's ways to man only after Paradise had already been lost. Protestant minister Van Ogden Vogt prioritizes worship's dynamic aspect by describing the ideal introit as a confident declarative exercise that captures attention and gets things going without anyone being aware of it.³

1 Manfred Weidhorn, *An Anatomy of Skepticism* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse), 2006: 41.

2 In a conversation following the writer's lecture on *The Anatomy of Worship*, Holy Blossom Temple, Toronto, January 20, 1992.

3 Van Ogden Vogt, *Art and Religion* (Boston: Beacon), 1948: 161.

Just so, an *indirect approach* (note the spatial terminology) is best for initiating prayer. Much the way a name beyond recall is remembered once we concentrate on something else, a worship opening has the most impact when it catches us unaware. On High Holy Days, Traditionalist congregations know that whoever leads the Musaf service will begin chanting its introit—*Hin’ni he-ani mi-ma’as*—from the rear of the synagogue, as if just entering. And although worshipers are well aware that their *shli’ah tsibbur* has been in the room all through Shaḥarit, that suddenly off-stage voice never fails to create a stir when it recites the opening words,

Here I am, deficient in deeds and awed by the fear of Your presence,
Yet I dare approach and plead before You on behalf of Your people.

That awe-inspiring phrase,—intoned as the *shli’ah tsibbur* moves solemnly forward among the rows of seated worshipers, making his/her way to the prayer Amud—establishes a mood of profound devotion that touches one and all.

The point here is that in order to consecrate worship *time*—we also need to sanctify the *space* where worship occurs. Yet the Talmud took pains to make sure that the sanctified space known as a synagogue⁴ would never be considered a replacement for the Jerusalem Temple. This “Temple in Miniature”—*mikdash m’at*⁵—was granted sanctity only in *z’man ha-zeh*, the present time between the Temple’s destruction and its ultimate rebuilding.⁶ This, according to an eschatological reading of Exodus 15:17, would be effected by God.⁷

The word “space” has a musical meaning in Persian, explains Iranian-born Jewish composer Shakhrokh Yadegary: “We talk about the *space* of a certain melody... music that changes the space that you walk into.”⁸ The Middle Eastern culture sphere envisions music spatially, assigning a specific area to each melorhythmic pattern, called *makam* (“mode” in Western parlance). Musicologist Harold S. Powers defines the Persian/ Arabic/Turkish word *makam* as “a particular *place* in the general scale of all pitches available in the [musical]

4 From the Greek *synagein* (“to bring together”), a place where Jews gather to worship.

5 *Targum Yonatan* on Ezekiel 11: 16.

6 Steven Fein, *This Holy Place — on the Sanctity of the Synagogue during the Greco-Roman Period* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press), 1997: 159.

7 *Mikdash adonai kon’nu yadekha* (“the Temple, O God, that Your hands established”). Since we know that the First and Second Temples were built by humans, the Divinely-built one described here must be the Third Temple.

8 Shakhrokh Yadegary, filmed interview at *Revisions through Music* exhibit, Judah L. Magnes Museum, Kerkelry, CA, September 10, 2007-July 6, 2008.

system.”⁹ Abraham Idelsohn understood *makam* to mean the *place*—perhaps a platform or stage—on which a musician stood when playing before the Sheik/Emperor/Sultan.¹⁰ The spatial term *makam* eventually expanded to signify the geographical area where a particular modal style had developed.

Composers for the Roman Catholic Mass “found the setting of Latin words to music a satisfying experience” partly because it “put meaning at a distance,” posits the Irish novelist Bernard MacLaverty.¹¹ Like Judaism’s continued use of the Hebrew language for *t’fillah*, Catholicism’s tradition (until recently) of reserving Latin for the offering of its Mass circumscribes a sacred space in which devotional acts could be performed to ritual music. And like the synagogue cantor’s voice leading a congregation in prayer,

... the linchpin of the Mass... is... mysterious, the first voice like a precentor,
followed by others, each of whom is a precentor to the rest.¹²

At the Red Sea, when all Israelites joined together for the very first time as a worshiping congregation, just as the spontaneous inventiveness of every individual merged with Moses’ voice in a white-hot lava flow of thanksgiving and glory (Exodus 15:1)—it created a “Palace in Time,”¹³ the liturgical counterbalance to God’s “Tabernacle of Holiness” that would shortly be erected in space (i.e., the Wilderness of Sinai; Exodus 25:8).

The late Lubavitcher Rebbe’s final public utterance, at the last *Farbrengen* (general gathering) he addressed, was: “Space depends on time; time reveals space.”¹⁴ A synagogue becomes a holy place when within its confines we perform a *specific ritual act at a specific time*, signalling the start of prayer. “In all sacred space,” avers composer Michael Isaacson, “a synergistic energy... is created between God and Israel.”¹⁵ He argues that the sacred music with which we fill those consecrated spaces gives our communal worship the “larger-than-life” feeling of drama that it needs to help us reach and understand the role that has been given us to play in God’s world.

9 Harold S. Powers, s. v., “Modal entities in Western Asia and South Asia, (i) *Maqām*, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: macMillan), 1980, 12: 423.

10 Abraham Z. Idelsohn, *Toldot ha-n’ginah ha-ivrit* (Tel-Aviv: Dvir), 1924: 6.

11 Bernard MacLaverty, *Grace Notes* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc.), 1997: 73-74.

12 *Ibid.*, pp. 132-133.

13 Abraham J. Heschel, *The Sabbath* (New York: Harper Torchbooks), 1951: 10, 12.

14 Sam Bourne, *The Righteous Men* (London: Harper Collins), 2007: 311.

15 Michael Isaacson, *Jewish Music as Midrash* (Woodland Hills, CA: Isaac Nathan Publishing Co.), 2007: 138f.

Take, for example, someone who has suffered the loss of a loved one. Synagogues have always respected a mourner's choice of *place* from which to recite *Kaddish yatom*, whether in the Sanctuary on Shabbat and holy days or in the Chapel on weekdays. In the Second Jerusalem Temple, mourners customarily entered the Outer Courtyard through a gate normally used by those on their way out. Inevitably, people exiting came face-to-face with mourners entering the "wrong" gate, and took it as a signal to console them with these words: *Hammakom y'naheim et'khem* ("May you be comforted by the *One Who dwells in this Place*."¹⁶ The word used to indicate "God" was (and still is) *makom*, which—like the pan-Arabic *makam*, also means "place." The implication is: may you find God's comfort in this Holy Place. If we look closely, posits Lawrence A. Hoffman, "the history of music turns out to be remarkably like the [history of]... sacred space."¹⁷

*Last year, we attempted
to correct a JSM 1979
error in the attribution
of a poem by Hyam
Plutzik (1911-1962),
and misquoted two of
the lines.*

*Here is the corrected
poem—with our
apologies to the Estate
of Hyam Plutzik.*

IF CAUSALITY IS IMPOSSIBLE,
GENESIS IS RECURRENT

The abrupt appearance of a yellow flower
Out of the perfect nothing, is miraculous.
The sum of Being, being discontinuous,
Must presuppose a God-out-of-the-box
Who makes a primal garden of each garden.
There is no change, but only re-creation.
One step ahead, As in the cinema
Upon the screen, all motion is illusory.
So if your mind were keener and could clinch
More than its flitting beachhead in the Permanent,
You'd see a twinkling world flashing and dying
Projected out of a tireless, winking Eye
Opening and closing in immensity—
Creating, with Its look, beside all else
Always Adamic passion and innocence
The bloodred apple or the yellow flower.

16 Anne Brener, "Reclaiming the Mourner's path," *Reform Judaism*, Summer 1997: 41; based on Mishnah *Middot* 11.2 (discussed in the final subsection of David Greenstein's article in the opening section of this issue).

17 Lawrence A. Hoffman, "Sacred Sound and Social Change," *Literature and Music in Jewish and Christian Experience*, Lawrence A. Hoffdfman & Janet Walton, eds. (South bend, IN: Notre Dame University Press), 1991: 331.

Page 186 of the 2011 **Journal** contained multiple errors in an art song by Aaron Blumenfeld. We regret these oversights and offer the following corrected version. Information on the entire collection is available from the composer at aaronblumenfeld@att.net; music samples are on his website: aarons-world.com. JAL

Akhein atah eil mistateir

Meditation on the Shoah

Text: Isaiah 45: 15

Music: Aaron Blumenfeld
Songs of Supplication, 2010, no. 11

Slowly, sustained, with devotion

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of four staves of music with lyrics underneath. Chord symbols are placed above the notes. The lyrics are in Hebrew with English transliterations. The score includes a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking at the beginning of the final staff.

Oy-voy voy-voy, oy voy,voy-voy, vom. Oy - voy oy-voy, oy-voy oy-voy, vom.
(A-khein a - tah eil mis - ta - teir,)

5 Oy-voy oy-voy, voy vom__voy voy-voy,oy-voy voy-voy vom. Oy voy-voy voy, dai-di dai-dai,
(a-khein a - tah eil mis - ta - teir.)

9 yom bom. Oy - voy voy - voy ya - da dom. A - khein a - tah, a -

12 khein a - tah, a - tah eil mis - ta - teir.

Truly, you are a God Who has hidden Yourself



Creating Sacred Space: Report on a Group Exploration

By Livia Selmanowitz Straus

Jewish ritual practices are imbedded with sensory stimulants involving visual input, olfactory stimuli, touch, sound and more. The smell of a candle burning mingles with the reflected and arced lights of the flame as the smells of spices sweeten the air and the sounds of Torah chants and melodies of *t'fillot* and *niggunim* lead worshippers beyond the reality of the here and now. This paper attempts to investigate how the arts can be integrated into the rabbinic and cantorial curricula as a means for teaching and analyzing specific community aesthetic sensitivities and utilizing this knowledge in creating a worship space that meets the needs of the particular population being serviced.

Human beings are surrounded by art carried in words, melodies, visuals, tastes. They impact on our senses, our intellect, our every breath. The words of the Bible open with the blank canvas of creation to which the supreme artist adheres an imprint. No 'time out' to sketch a star, outline an ocean, adhere dates to a tree for Tu B'shvat. There is an inspired unity that echoes through time and reverberates in each of us. The framers of the rituals and the *b'rakhot* understood this.

To the Biblical man, the sublime is but a form in which the presence of God strikes forth... The stars sing, the mountains tremble in His presence. To think of God, man must hear the world... Few are the songs in the Bible that celebrate the beauty of nature, but these songs are ample testimony to the fact that the Biblical man was highly sensitive to form, color, force and emotion... The beauty of the world issued from the grandeur of God... There is a higher form of seeing.¹

How can I look at a tree, a miracle beyond words, and take it in? My unique gift as a human being is in the framing of a word, a response that leaves my heart and mind and subsequently names that wonder that I feel inside. And I burst out in the mystical, magical words of my ancestors: *Barukh oseh b'reishit*. My hands move gracefully to embrace the flame of a candle, a flame which cannot be contained, which is as ether, which is as the passing as the Shabbat

1 Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man* (Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, Inc.), 1991:95-97.

glow, and I embrace it with the words which echo from my earliest memory, as if from the womb: *L'hadlik neir shel shabbat*.

An instantaneous connection is established between the woman saying the blessing over the candles and the blessing of the priests in the Temple... While priests bless the congregation, the worshippers customarily avert their eyes from the radiance of the *Shechinah*... At the moment of the physical kindling of the lights... a pause... allowing her to retreat deep into herself in imitation of God's initial act of *Tzimtzum*. Only through these few personal moments of meditation can she draw down upon herself and her family the invisible energies of the Primordial Light of *Ein-Sof*.²

The conscious use of the arts as a component of religious education can be valuable in:

- Enhancing the spiritual effect of religious practice
- Developing a critical academic understanding of the value of ritual performance
- Imbuing textual learning with multiple levels of understanding

We uniquely process the emotional impact of consciously visioning the 'like' fire, 'like' sapphires, 'like' rainbows of the vision of Ezekiel, the psychodramatic performance of a Biblical or Talmudic text,³ the intonation of *Shirat moshe*, the pageantry of the priestly psalmic processions as bells sewn to the hems of their garments tinkle and musical instrumentation sounds, the mournful plaint of *U-n'taneh tokef* or of a Hasidic niggun, subconsciously smelling the 'red, red' (Genesis 25:30) which Esau so desperately relishes... praying in a sanctuary of deep ochres and azure blues or surrounded by mile-high book cases with heavily scented leather-bound volumes, a wooded area or a meditation courtyard.

Gaston Bachelard⁴ explores what he refers to as the anthro-cosmology of a space. The theory is that once inhabited, a space continues to carry the imprint of the inhabitant upon which future residents overlay their unique stamp. Likewise, the space will impact on the individual in terms of behavior, decoration, reaction, etc. Bachelard moves us through our childhood homes, from basement to attic and from nest to manor, through the developmental stages of our lives, our fears and psychological maturation as paralleled by our reading of space. The cellar hides psychic fears behind its closed door,

2 Freemah Gottlieb, *The Lamp of God* (Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, Inc.), 1996:230-231.

3 Peter Pitzele, "The Psychodrama of the Bible", *Religious Education* 86:4, pp. 562-571.

4 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press), 1994.

while the attic is a space we look up to, the space which may eventually be our “loft”. They parallel heaven and hell, *shamayim* and *sh’ol*. A closed door at a child’s eye level may hold the terror of the unknown or the mystery for exploration. A child standing before the closed door to the parent’s bedroom will vision mother and father behind the door.

Peninah Schramm⁵ will help a child vision the God presence, by telling a story which clarifies that the hidden, even if not seen, does exist. Lawrence Kushner⁶ speaks of Abraham’s visioning in the Cave of Machpelah. What he sees is the imprint of ancestral holy ground, reaching back to Adam and Eve. The darkness that would impact negatively on others, becomes the black sculptural space of Abraham’s genetic memory. This spatial memory is sensed, envisioned, but not necessarily verbalized. When an individual finds a dream house, or a young child gravitates to its daydream corner, there is an internal voice saying: “I belong here.” Many films build on this concept: “The Amityville Horror,” “The Sixth Sense,” “What Dreams May Come.” Pilgrimage sites are built on this concept. How many of us have touched the stones of the Wailing Wall and had our minds hark back to our early national memories?

In the Maccabean rededication of the Temple, the Lauder restoration of the Orenienstrasse Synagogue in Berlin, or any other retrieved religious sanctuary or historically marked site (witness the reconstruction of the Twin Tower site in Downtown Manhattan), we have a sense of newness superimposed on the old, but the memory of the old remains and is then refracted through the new. In Maccabees I:4, we are told that the Temple is cleaned, weeds removed, defiled alters dismantled and the ritual objects restored or recreated in replication of the originals. On the day that the rededication occurs, “it was rededicated with songs and harps and lutes and cymbals... They decorated the front of the Temple with gold crowns and small shields.” The past is overlaid with present reality, memory of Godly connections with personal loss as well as victory.

John Stilgoe, in his Introduction to the Bachelard text, states:

If the house is the first universe for its young children... how does its space shape all subsequent knowledge of other space... Is that house... the shelter of the imagination itself?... The house is a nest for dreaming, a shelter for imagining... a nook, a cranny, a seashell... an inner space

5 Peninah Schramm, *Together: A Child-Parent Kit*, Issue Five —“Hide and Seek—A Game About God,” created by V. Kelman, J. Grishaver, J. Golubi and A. Rowe, tape narration by Peninah Schramm (New York: The Melton Resdearch Center of the Jewish Theological Seminary), 1985.

6 Lawrence Kushner, *The River of Light* (Rossel Books, 1981), pp. 3-23.

of solitude... to be contained in something tiny, (there) to imagine the immensity of the forest, the voluptuousness of high places.

Stephen Covey⁷ speaks of the successful leader as the one who has deep respect for and understanding of the population s/he is dealing with. An Academy for Jewish Religion student of mine insightfully drew on Covey in understanding the move from rage to altered educational approaches by Moses after the incident near Sinai. Instead of dwelling on a sense of betrayal and personalizing the sin of the Golden Calf, Moses came to understand the need to tailor the desert mentality that embraced void and enormity with the needs of the emancipated Hebrews for active communal participation. He returned to the Hebrews with design specifications that incorporated some of the familiar from their Egyptian Bondage, and some of their antiquity going back to Abrahamic times. There would be no visual idol, but only the invisible God of Abraham. There would be gold vessels and rich colorful tapestry as in Egypt. Their possessions, their trinkets of enslavement, were melded into the new structure (Exodus 35). Physical, historic and cultural memory merged in an artistic space that spoke to the fears, hopes and desires of the emerging Hebrew nation. Ritual performances by priests and congregants, visual symbols, identifiable boundaries, the taste of manna speaking to the individual unique palate, musical instruments, much the conscious design and artistic execution of Bezalel (Exodus 36:3-39:32), were used to create a space which embraced the memory, aspirations and dreams of the populace, imprinting them with a new theology and ethnic language and educating them for their ultimate home environment so that they emerge with a living faith system.

How then do we transpose all this data so that it is usable for us as educators, rabbis, leaders in the community of Israel?

At a rabbinical-and-cantorial retreat in November 1999, and then in an abbreviated presentation in 2010, students of the Academy for Jewish Religion gathered for a program titled: "Experiencing the Sacred Through the Prism of the Arts." As individuals vested in becoming religious leaders in the community, the goal was to explore the artistic expressions of movement, color, architecture and drama as modalities by which the impact of the spiritual could be enhanced personally as well as in *communitas*. A critical subtext was that artistic and spiritual responses be based in personal memory, communal or cultural heritage, and personal preference or proclivity. The inference was that the greater our self understanding as well as the understanding we have of each individual member of our congregations, the greater will be our suc-

7 Stephen Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Fireside Books), 1990.

cess in creating comfort spaces, integrated programs and the introduction of materials that embrace participants. Sharing family stories, daydreams, hopes and aspirations, drawing out specifics of early homes and imprinted episodes and relationships, creates a richer individual picture than the types of commonly used surveys which are simply data based.

If our tradition stresses anything, it stresses the uniqueness of each individual. A query as to the country or city of origin as opposed to requesting, say, an exquisite, detailed description of the bedroom in which one grew up, is a case in point. As inter-connections are discovered, communal connectiveness evolves. For example, were my room of origin to contain a doorless closet painted the blue of the sky (as described by one of my students whose 'blue/teal' quote follows), this being a repository for my toys, clothing and precious objects and not the closed off cubicle of childhood monsters, then blue may be my color of comfort, my spiritual marker. When this marker is shared, then an emerging sanctuary of comforting, womb-like blues evolves. Expanding our artistic markers to encompass oral, aural, movement, dramatic and olfactory components, serves to broaden experiential impact. When the richness of individual preference informs the design of our religious space, then this space will not only be specific to the community, but elements of the space will remain with us in our homes as well. Thus spiritual and religious wealth come to surround every facet of our lives in a true manifestation of *Yerushalayim shel ma'alah*.

A valuable exercise in learning and sharing within community is the development of an interactive art project. Though some people feel comfortable verbally sharing in 'friendship circles,' then others need more space for introspective thought processing and less overt exposure. Visual art can help provide an entrée when thoughtfully designed to incorporate meditative processing time. In preparation for our retreat each student was asked to think about or to create an object reflective of his or her inner "weltanschauung" (state of being). A dedicated place for self-reflection would be marked and some significant amount of time spent there. The space would be:

- a. Quiet
- b. A space of comfort
- c. A space that allows one to identify objects of like and dislike by very focused attention and concentration.
- d. A place to breathe deeply several times as an entrée into a self-investigative process.

Upon arrival at the retreat site, students were asked to place the objects that they had pre-made, in a particular self-chosen locus. Those created in situ utilized materials made available by the retreat staff (vividly colored fabric of varied textures, spices, candles, markers, paints, glitter, etc.), personal objects brought by the students or found elements from the outside environment. As each student imprinted his/her own 'being,' a shared communal space emerged. The opportunity to share in words the significance of the visual presentation, took place at a later point on the retreat so that the sensory processing could initially stand on its own. Students were also asked to walk the space of the retreat and to sense the history and topography of the place, so that their imprint would meld with the memory of that which was before. One of our student's post-retreat feedback speaks to the core of the experiential goal:

The shift was slight, but for me it was about color. After the space exercise in my room back home, I had connected with the sky blue of my closet. Into the sacred space created in the ice rink (the converted ice rink, with its blue ceiling, was our assigned prayer space), I brought a necklace with a bird made of shells. In dreaming in my space at home, I had uncovered birds etched in copper upon a wicker case. These birds 'flew with me' into my own space within the ice rink. We were ready to dream a sacred space.⁸

The space created was then added onto or altered as the feel or need arose. It was utilized throughout the retreat as *the* prayer space. Candles were sometimes used to illuminate the area, decorated movable room dividers were shifted, allowing the mood to visually fit the needs of the time or the goal of the service. In keeping with the theme and to 'set the stage,' an opening Torah study dealing with the use of the color variations of red and their psychological impact and 'parshanutic' implications was presented. An introduction to the retreat theme emphasized that we are all 'on the way,' that there are no right or wrong answers, that we are building on the internal and searching for the interconnectedness of history and community. Each person, each in the image of God, has a unique voice, valuable and complex. Religious education, experience and performance is not about fact, but is about feeling, yearning, questioning and reaching.

Session I: Prayer through the arts:

Our formal opening session involved the students in the exploration of the use of three artistic modalities to enhance the prayer experience. The choice of prayer for this exercise is critical. It should be a prayer that everyone is familiar with (the memory factor), that has various levels of meaning and vari-

8 Leslie Schotz, November 25, 1999.

ous sections of intensity; what might be called a 'rich' prayer. For our purposes we selected the *Eil adon* for its mystical content as well as its abstract references to character traits. Through stages the students moved from dramatic readings in Hebrew, to unpacking the verses of the text in order to extract the meaning of the liturgist and then to imprint their own unique order and thought on it, to free thought collage work, to abstract-color-field emoting, to movement representation and reaction, to musical rendition in traditional melody and niggun. After each segment a 'buzz session' was set aside to unpack the thought processes that went into the artistic presentation. Though most of the activities were done alone or in small groups, the movement segment transitioned students from individual to full group interactive space.

During the prose 'unpacking' session, one group folded the male pronouns of God under so as to validate the female participation in the Godly sphere. In collage, God was a sun with emanating beams while in the abstract a blank sheet with streamers reaching beyond and everywhere, or a deep gold or multi mix of color 'bled' onto the drawing paper. The movement segment drew on the prosaic and visual artistic experiences, challenging the individual to portray feelings of dissolution, rage, kindness, wonder, angelic movement and the emulation of objects in nature. The task then was to meld the movements/emotions of the individual with partners as well as with the larger group in a symmetry of motion ending in a moving, ultimately slow-stepping circle, each person in sync with the one in front, the haunting strains of the guitar in an *Eil adon* niggun as a backdrop, slowing in pace over an extended period of time so that the self coheres in the meditative presence of the other.

Session II:

The second formal art session aimed at drawing on personal objects and personal story as vehicles to enrich home worship, thus moving from the communal to the private sphere. Judaism was never meant to be an exclusively communal religion. Both worship and world-view are framed in the experience of the lone being as well as the interaction within family. The exclusively '*shul* school Jew' is far from the all-encompassing nature of what 'being Jewish' is about. Run as parallel sessions, some students participated in an encounter with a Biblical text. The question framed did not simply call for the interpretation or midrash on the text, but for personal reaction: How do I feel about the characters in the story? While one person might condemn or even be infuriated by, for example, David for his infraction with Bat Sheva, another participant may be softer in tone, seeing the evolution of a leader from teen age impulsiveness. What makes each person take the view that they do? What in their own background, past and present, informs their stand? In the arts session, various ritual objects were identified for the significance with which

we encounter them. The question is, in fact, raised as to what constitutes a ritual object? Is it, as for one of the students, a grandfather's old suitcase that evokes memory and a particular action each time it is seen? Is it the way I cup my hands over the Sabbath candles as I intone a grandparent's prayer? And, were I to design a ritual object which would raise my self-conscious being to the highest level, how would I fashion it in looks, with what prayer mantra, what action and ultimately, possibly even with what familial participation?

In the words of one student:

The art experience involving memory of ritual objects connected to my experience of movement from the previous session (moving from the public prayer space to the private). At first I could not think of a ritual object that I related to. When Professor Straus shared her own ritual objects (e.g. a photomontage superimposed over a great grandmother's Yiddish prayer and a Sephardic *Kameah* [amulet] with kabbalistic angeology to be hung on a wall) my memory was jogged! The Sephardic *mizrah* ritual object reminded me of the *hamsa* I hang on my 'travelling backpack' for school. For me it is one of the most powerful ritual objects that I have owned. It was the color of the stone that attracted me to obtain my protective *hamsa*. As fate would have it, it was the same color as the ceiling in the ice rink. The teal blue stone symbolizes my past, present and future goal of creating *tikkun olam* in my rabbinate. As my *hamsa* identifies my distinct backpack in a sea of traveling suitcases and backpacks, it also represents my unique Jewish *neshamah*.⁹

In the words of another student:

When the assignment was given, I immediately decided that I wanted something that was portable, that would define its own ground, so to speak. So I started with an umbrella. Then I thought about *tahat kanfei ha-shekhinah*, and I incorporated a tallit that draped over the umbrella. I remembered how hard it was for me to purchase my first tallit, and I took a marker and wrote the word *mit'atephet* on the *atarah*. I then purchased tefillin. I asked if one could cut the straps, since they were too long. I was told yes, but not to throw them away; to put them in a genizah. I'd been saving them in an envelope, so when I made my umbrella I incorporated the straps, tying one long piece into a knot like on *tefillin shel rosh*. Then I took photos of my ancestors, and hung them from the struts of the umbrella. I wrote their names in Hebrew on the umbrella fabric. I love it... If I could, I would take more time, recreate it bigger, all white with a huge wrap-style tallit, do a performance with it and its accompanying extended story.¹⁰

In the anonymous words of a third student:

9 Leslie Schotz.

10 Marcia Lane.

The rage I felt over David, was terrifying to me. It was my rage at betrayal, at abandonment, at personal struggle. I feared continuing the discussion, yet, was simultaneously dismayed when the session ended. David had become a mirror into my own soul, and what I saw I did not completely like. Is this part of our humanity, to hide what is most painful? Is the pain lessened by seeing one's self reflected in one of the greatest of our heroes?"

Sharing the stuff of the ritual objects, the memories they evoked as well the individuals' imprint on what had been handed down, so that relevance to who I am now becomes part of my worship, closed this session.

Session 3:

The task was now to follow our transition from individual within public space (session 1), to home space (session 2) and then to communal space growing out of the shared Buberian 'I-Thou' dialogue. How, in Stephen Covey's words, do we create for 'win, win'? What can we share and maintain in our personal vision and what must each individual accommodate to? How can this accommodation take place while my spiritual needs are met as well as the spiritual needs of my co-religionists? And what are basic symbolic and ritual object ingredients, if such in fact do exist, which must be incorporated as part of our identity with *am yisrael*? Does my community share some of my vision so that we can reach a consensus or is this not the right community for me?

In preparation for this session, students were asked to read an article by Rabbi Neil Gillman, "Judaism and the Search for Spirituality."¹¹ In his article, Gillman states:

On the most elementary level, the design of a physical space in which worship takes place both reflects and in turn pre-determines the model of spirituality that can be embodied in the worship service that takes place within the space... Rows of seats, riveted to the floor... the *bimah* as an elevated stage-like structure with two pulpits—for rabbi and cantor—who are located above and facing the congregation... The congregation limited in its ability to move physically and is hence largely passive. The model is a theatrical one... A congregant who would be moved to pace as he prays, to fall to his knees or to go to the shelves to consult a Bible or a medieval text would be totally frustrated... Prayer is something you watch others do.

Using drawing paper, clay, sticks, etc., students joined in groups of 10 to create their ideal spiritual space. One student described it:

11 *Conservative Judaism XXXVIII:2*, pp. 2-18, and particularly 15-16.

The large-group ‘*mishkan*’-building experience proved to be a *bashert* moment of the presence of the *Shekhinah* as our *ner tamid* had the word ‘beneath’ cut out in a perfect 8th-inch shape of a flame... Also, that teal-blue color showed up again as a choice of a select group of materials. Either I or another member of our group put that teal-colored piece of fabric upon the sukkah that we had created as a passageway to entering the *mishkan*. The word Shalom was built of clay and made up part of our ark. Each contribution by the members of the *mishkan* group reflected my own personal experience. The fact that we had chosen to be near each other in our spaces in the ice rink seemed to be related to how our beings connected in creating our *mishkan*... I felt that art in itself was a means of tapping into the sacred.¹²

With no limits placed on imagination, students were able to integrate objects that held loving memories with a greater understanding as to how these elements spoke to them. The recognition of the greater world of memory, the personal, the communal and the historic, intensified the meaning of the spaces created. Opened areas were representative of freedom while small spaces were identified as womb-like structures. The use of natural materials, an openness to the outside, bringing the outside in through a tree growing in the center of the sanctuary, a stream running through the sanctuary, undergirding the reading lectern and flowing on to the ark holding the Torah—the fluid of life—all creatively added to the spiritual vision.

Closing session:

Panelists, drawn from the artists/instructors and clergy working with the arts in a congregational setting, gave some insights on observations of student activity during the retreat, on the growing ease with working in the arts and on personal resonances. They spoke of the difficulties one may face in integrating arts in an overt way, in programming, in teaching and in terms of creating a different, even if potentially more pleasing, esthetic space. Students were also able to share insights as well as frustrations. Some could barely speak for the intensity of the memories raised and the palpable present of inner being. Subsequent to the retreat, students voiced instances where programs on the retreat were utilized in student pulpits. They shared the impact that the arts had on their religious performance and spiritual elevation.

In an article titled, “Toward a Process for Critical Response,”¹³ a dancer searches for a means of dialoguing with fellow dancers in a way which will not negate her own creativity, but enrich it. We all have a need for self-verification,

12 Leslie Schotz.

13 *Alternate Roots*, 1993.

yet hearing others' insights (as opposed to the negative concept of criticism) greatly enriches our own lives. Though we all express ourselves artistically on some level, though we all are impacted on by the arts, we sometimes need encouragement in letting our creativity fly, in using it to enrich our life experiences. Our author states:

I discovered that the more I made public my own questions about the work, the more eager I was to engage in a dialogue about how to fix the problem... the more I gently questioned my students the deeper I got into their work... I find if I tell people I am still working on the evolution... all of this openness creates an environment... people want to hear that what they have just completed has meaning to another human being.

As the retreat unfolded, the facilitators on this pathway to art and the spiritual experience kept meeting, sharing observations (critical since much in this process is not put into words. The eyes and the physical movements may bespeak what we hear), and insights and renegotiating plans that, though programmed in advance, had to be altered to meet the mood, the needs and the experiences being brought to the table. For creativity to flourish there must be an intensity of listening, watching, seeing and emoting on the part of the facilitators, both as leaders and as behavioral models for group interaction. The end product is never the issue, because there is no end. It is forever fluid, forever changing. No opinion is invalid. Each dot, each word, each color, is a mirror of the soul.

Religiosity is the creative—religion is the organizing—principle. Religiosity starts anew with every young person shaken to his very core by the mystery. Religiosity means activity—the elemental entering interrelation with the absolute.¹⁴

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14 Martin Buber, “Jewish Religiosity”, *On Judaism*, ed. Nachum Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books), 1972:81.

Liturgy and the Remains of the Dura Europos Synagogue: How Did It Function as a Religious Venue?

by Steven Fine

To my mind, the explanation of the scheme [of the Dura Europos synagogue paintings] must be sought among current opinions of the members of the Jewish Community who commissioned the frescoes. —Henri Stern¹

The pictures were an integral part of the house of worship, related to the order of prayer or readings and perhaps used as “illustrative” material for sermons.

—Stephen S. Kayser²

The Dura Europos synagogue is the best-preserved Jewish liturgical space from late antiquity.³ The subject of intense investigation, this synagogue has developed far greater cultural importance than is usually the case with an excavated artifact. Dura provided the ultimate proof that Jews in antiquity were not an “aniconic” people. This fact was of more than casual significance. As Jews worked out their own identities during the turbulent nineteenth and twentieth centuries, art was often a place where the very humanity of the Jew was tested. For many, the existence of “Jewish art” was nothing less than proof that the Jews are a normal nation like any other. The stakes were thus astonishingly high.

During the decades after the synagogue was discovered in 1932, scholars sought out literary parallels to these paintings, generally from rabbinic litera-

1 H. Stern, “The Orpheus in the Synagogue of Dura-Europos: A Correction,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 22 (1959) 373.

2 S. S. Kayser, “Defining Jewish Art,” in *Mordecai M. Kaplan Jubilee Volume* (ed. M. Davis; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1953) 460.

3 A less technical version of this essay recently appeared in my *Art and Judaism in the Greco-Roman World: Toward a New Jewish Archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 172–83. Stephen A. Kaufman of the Hebrew Union College kindly assisted me with the computer enhancement of the Dura Europos Hebrew liturgical fragments and discussed my readings with me. Many thanks to the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University for images of the Dura Hebrew liturgical fragments. The bibliography on the Dura Europos synagogue is now quite large. The most significant monographs on this synagogue include: *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Preliminary Report of the Sixth Season of Work October 1932—March 1933* (ed. M. I. Rostovtzeff et al.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936); R. Du Mesnil du Buisson, *Les peintures de la synagogue de Doura-Europos, 245—256* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1939); E. L. Sukenik, *Beit ha-kneset shel Dura-Europos ve-Tsiyurav* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1947); C. H. Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, with contributions by C. C. Torrey, C. B. Welles, and B. Geiger (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956); E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols during the Graeco-Roman Period* (New York: Pantheon, 1953—67); K. Weitzmann and H. L. Kessler, *The Frescoes of the Dura Synagogue and Christian Art* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1990)

ture. Parallels were found for almost every image. This work was carried out mainly by archaeologists. For historians of ancient Judaism working during the second half of the last century, the Dura Europos synagogue (and other discoveries, most notably the Galilean synagogue mosaics at Beth Alpha and Hammath Tiberias B) provided the raw materials with which to construct a non- (or less) rabbinic Judaism. Christians in search of the hellenized Jewish roots of non-orthodox Christianity and Jews interested in marginalizing the rabbinic Sages within the history of Judaism became fellow travelers in this search for the “historical rabbis” and the historical non-rabbis. Most art historians, preoccupied with finding the Jewish roots of early Christian art, focused on the Dura synagogue as a kind of way-station between Christian art of the late Roman and Byzantine period and hypothesized (though never discovered) Jewish manuscripts produced in Alexandria. Precious little reflection has appeared on the subject that might seem most obvious in the history of this synagogue: How did the Dura synagogue function as a religious

space? In this essay I will begin to take up this challenge. My study will be refracted through the focusing lens of a fragmentary Hebrew prayer parchment discovered near the synagogue that has been widely ignored by interpreters of the Dura synagogue. After carefully analyzing this text from a philological perspective, I will apply the insights gained from it to the interpretation of the Dura synagogue’s inscriptions and iconography. These small parchment fragments have broad implications for the interpretation of the Dura Europos synagogue and its paintings, providing textual legitimation for the use of rabbinic materials to interpret the paintings. They also suggest that the mind-sets of the community members who commis-

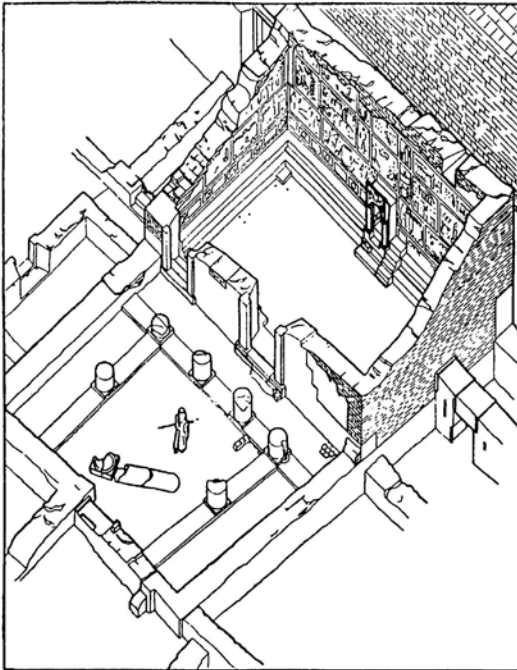


Fig. 1. Isometric drawing of the Dura Europos Synagogue, drawing of the Torah Shrine of the Duras Europas Synagogue by Nahman Avigad (courtesy of the E. L. Sukenik Archive).

sioned the paintings and lived with them paralleled those of the rabbinic Sages in many ways. I will illustrate this interpretation by paralleling the themes of the paintings with those of the central rabbinic prayer, the *Tefillah* (or, *Amidah*). By using all of the extant evidence—architectural, artistic, paleographic, and literary—I will suggest an interpretation that treats the Dura Europos synagogue as the liturgical setting for the life of the local Jewish community that built it and played out its communal life there.

I. Questions of Methodology

The Dura Europos synagogue has been the subject of numerous important studies during the 80 years since its discovery. The best of these interpretations have focused on identifying the various images in the synagogue paintings, and identifying literary and iconographic parallels to each image. The most significant of these were carried out by E. L. Sukenik, whose Hebrew volume appeared in 1947, and more exhaustively by Carl Kraeling, whose final report on the synagogue appeared in 1956.⁴ Attempts at the theoretical or global interpretation of these images have been less successful, with art historians and historians alike imposing templates upon the material that have had the net effect of limiting interpretation.

Historians of ancient Judaism have often treated the Dura paintings as a vehicle for uncovering non-rabbinic Judaism in antiquity. While at some level useful, this approach originated and was deeply embedded in the nineteenth-century Protestant notion that art is anathema to Judaism.⁵ A derivative of this approach was developed by E. R. Goodenough, who did not see art as anathema to Judaism as a whole, but only to the Judaism of the rabbinic Sages. Goodenough saw the Dura paintings as proof of the existence of a non-rabbinic Jewish mystery religion on the Greco-Roman model, a stepping-stone between Pauline Christianity and the late antique Church.⁶

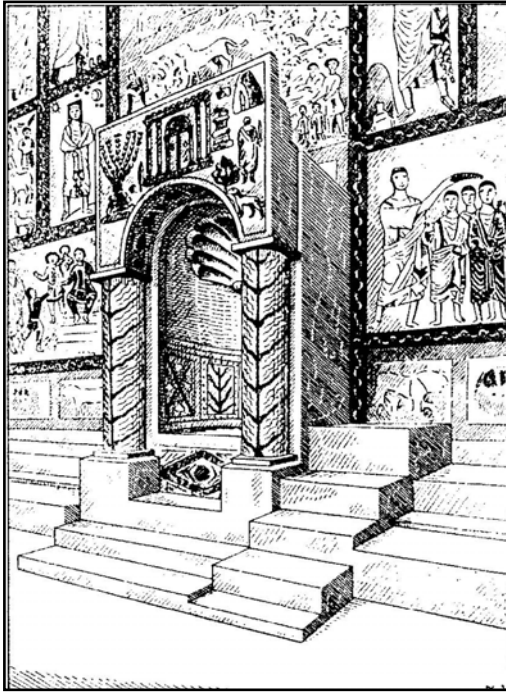
Art historians have most often viewed the Dura paintings as a backdrop for the history of Christian art and assigned significance to them on the basis of their relationship to what followed centuries later in the Christian West. This is related to the conflicted, generally negative, images of Judaism and Jewishness presented over the last century by art historians—when they even chose to deal with these issues at all. Jewish artistic production (like, for example, Byzantine, African, and Islamic arts) has suffered both marginalization and

4 Ibid.

5 See K. Bland, *The Artless Jew: Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) 13–58.

6 See my discussion of Goodenough's work in my *Art and Judaism in the Greco-Roman World*, 35–46.

worse: it has been valued only for the ways that it relates to the interests of the dominant and amazingly long-lived Western European canon of Art History.⁷



Most prominently, Adolph Goldschmidt, his student Kurt Weitzmann, and Weitzmann's student Herbert Kessler believe that they discovered in the synagogue paintings evidence for Jewish manuscript paintings that serve as the “missing link” between supposed Jewish manuscript painting of the Hellenistic period and the Christian art of the fourth century and beyond.⁸ While this theory is losing its tight hold on the scholarly imagination, a noted art historian could still treat it as “proved” in an article that appeared in 2000.⁹

Fig. 2. Drawing of the Torah Shrine of the Dura Europos Synagogue by Nahman Avigad courtesy of the E. L. Sukenik Archive).

7 See the essays collected by C. Soussloff, *Jewish Identity in Modern Art History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); M. Olin, *The Nation without Art* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 2001); Bland, *The Artless Jew*, and my review of this work at <http://www.caareviews.org/reviews/bland.html>.

8 Weitzmann and Kessler, *The Frescoes of the Dura Synagogue and Christian Art*, passim.

9 E. Revel-Neher, “From Dream to Reality: Evolution and Continuity in Jewish Art,” in *From Dura to Sepphoris: Studies in Jewish Art and Society in Late Antiquity* (ed. L. I. Levine and Z. Weiss; Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series; Portsmouth, R.I.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2000) 54. Joseph Gutmann is the most consistent critic of this approach. See in particular his “Illustrated Jewish Manuscript in Antiquity: The Present State of the Question,” in *No Graven Images: Studies in Art and the Hebrew Bible* (ed. J. Gutmann; New York: Ktav, 1971) 232–48; idem, “The Illustrated Midrash in the Dura Europos Synagogue Paintings: A New Dimension for the Study of Judaism,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 50 (1983) 100–104. See more recently, A. J. Wharton, *Refiguring the Post Classical City: Dura Europos, Jerash, Jerusalem, and Ravenna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 38–51; R. Jensen, “The Dura Europos Synagogue, Early Christian Art, and Religious Life in Dura Europos,” in *Jews, Christians and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction during the Greco-Roman Period* (ed. S. Fine; London: Routledge, 1999) 174–89. See Olin, *The Nation without Art*, 127–54.

The Dura synagogue paintings have seldom been interpreted as decorative elements of a building produced by a local Jewish community as a context for its liturgical life. Perhaps this is not all that surprising for classically trained art historians, who generally have focused on diachronic iconographic analysis and not on localized holistic interpretation. In recent years art historical scholarship has moved toward more contextual interpretation.¹⁰ Most important for our purposes is Annabelle Wharton's analysis of the Dura Europos synagogue. Wharton criticizes earlier scholarship for ignoring the religious aspect of synagogue decoration and asserts a holistic approach to the Dura synagogue paintings. Wharton recognized that the Dura synagogue images and rabbinic literature are interwoven in ways far more complex than previous scholars have noted. Her approach stresses the similarities in mind-set that she posits between the creators of the paintings and the rabbis of Palestine and Babylonia of the third century. While scholars such as Kraeling, Sukenik, and later Jewish art historian Gutmann could find parallels between rabbinic literature and the individual images within the synagogue, Wharton has posited a shared "midrashic" mind-set with the rabbis.¹¹ I have argued similar correspondences within Palestinian synagogues, which is methodologically easier owing to the geographical and chronological proximity between rabbinic literature of the Byzantine period and archaeological sources of the same period.¹²

Relations between rabbinic mind-sets and those of the synagogue painters/donors/members in Dura are harder to assert. No known rabbis lived in Dura, and in any event this border city was somewhat distant from rabbinic centers in the Galilee and Babylonia (modern Iraq). Scholars have noted the many parallels between rabbinic midrash and the paintings, a search that parallels the modern search for exegetical proximity between the Sages and the Church Fathers. Thankfully, our parchment fragments containing the texts of a Hebrew liturgy were discovered at Dura. These shed considerable light on the relationship between Dura and the rabbis. This document provides a key to the question of conceptual contiguousness with the Sages. Significantly, it provides an important, if narrow, window into the liturgical life of the Jews of Dura and their synagogue.

10 I discuss recent scholarship more fully in my *Art and Judaism in the Greco-Roman World*, 47–56. See especially T. F. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971); idem, *Byzantium from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (New York: Abrams, 1998) 97.

11 Wharton, *Refiguring*, 38–51.

12 Fine, "Art and the Liturgical Context"; idem, *Art and Judaism*, 146–64, 184–209.

II. The Dura Liturgical Parchment

In concluding his extensive discussion of the Dura Europos synagogue, E. R. Goodenough, writes: "Just how worship was conducted in the room we have no way whatever of knowing, except as we transport over to it the information about synagogue worship which survives in rabbinical writings."¹³ Joseph Gutmann, who hazarded the most extensive discussion of liturgy at Dura, writes similarly that "we have no evidence of Jewish literature from such Syrian cities as Dura. . ."¹⁴ Astonishingly, neither Goodenough nor Gutmann seems to have been aware of the Dura parchment and its implications. Scholars of Jewish liturgy did not know of the Dura fragments either. None of the major monographs or surveys of the history of Jewish prayer makes reference to them. This is quite perplexing, since the Dura prayer parchment is the earliest extant archaeological evidence of Jewish prayer from post-Temple times, dating perhaps a century before the earliest Aramaic and Hebrew Palestinian synagogue inscriptions that were influenced by liturgy,¹⁵ and five centuries before the earliest Cairo Geniza documents.¹⁶ Though the existence of written liturgical texts is evidenced in rabbinic sources, the Dura parchments are the earliest physical evidence for Jewish prayer manuscripts during this period.¹⁷

The Dura Europos Hebrew liturgical fragments were discovered on the narrow street to the west side of the synagogue (designated "Wall Street" by the excavators) on December 17, 1932. The Dura parchment was buried when Wall Street, the synagogue, and all buildings in its environs were filled with earth to create an embankment wall.¹⁸ This embankment was built in

13 Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*, 10:198.

14 J. Gutmann, *The Dura-Europos Synagogue: A Re-evaluation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) xx. See also idem, "Early Synagogue and Jewish Catacomb Art and Its Relation to Christian Art," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römische Welt* 2.21.2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984) 1313–42; idem, "The Synagogue of Dura Europos: A Critical Analysis," in *Evolution of the Synagogue: Problems and Progress* (ed. H. C. Kee and L. H. Cohick; Harrisburg: Trinity, 1999) 83.

15 On the relationships between synagogue prayer and synagogue inscriptions, see G. Foerster, "Synagogue Inscriptions and Their Relation to Liturgical Versions," *Cathedra* 17 (1981) 12–40 [Heb.]; J. Yahalom, "Synagogue Inscriptions in Palestine: A Stylistic Classification," *Immanuel* 10 (1980) 47–57.

16 On the Cairo Geniza in general, see: N. Danzig, *A Catalogue of Fragments of Halakhah and Midrash from the Cairo Genizah in the Elkan Nathan Adler Collection of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1997) 3–87 [Heb.]; S. C. Reif, *A Jewish Archive from Old Cairo: The History of Cambridge University's Genizah Collection* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000).

17 *t. Shab.* 14:3 and the parallels cited by S. Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-fshutah* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1992) 3:205–6.

18 The synagogue was part of a group of contiguous buildings designated Block L7 by the excavators. See C. Torrey, "Parchments and Papyri," in *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Preliminary Report* (ed. M. I. Rostovtzeff; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936) 417; Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, 3.

the failed attempt to support the exposed western wall of Dura in preparation for the final Persian siege of Dura in about 256 c.e.¹⁹ In the frenzy of that moment, the parchment was apparently lost when covered with a huge mound of soil. While texts from within the synagogue were apparently cleared away in the last days of Dura Europos (none were uncovered there), the liturgical parchment was lost, only to be recovered by modern scholars.²⁰ The fragments are today preserved in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University.²¹

The early and prompt publication of the Dura fragments made this artifact widely accessible. Scholars who studied the Dura Europos preliminary or final reports could gain easy access to them. In addition, until very recently they had not received anything approaching serious attention since the publication of J. L. Teicher's highly idiosyncratic 1963–64 article, "Ancient Eucharistic Prayers in Hebrew," in which he claims that the parchment represents Jewish-Christian prayer.²² Our document was first published by C. Torrey in 1936 in the preliminary report of the Dura synagogue excavation (and restated by Kraeling in the final report of the synagogue in 1956).²³ Torrey's reading was improved upon by R. Du Mesnil du Buisson in 1939,²⁴ and by E. L. Sukenik in 1947.²⁵ The editors of the final report on the manuscripts at Dura accepted Du Mesnil du Buisson's readings, adding little to the discussion.

Unlike their peers in related disciplines, academic Talmudists were quite attentive to the implications of the parchment from a very early date, undoubtedly because this document fit well within their general frame of reference. The publication of medieval manuscripts and Cairo Geniza fragments was, and still is, a major preoccupation of academic Talmud scholars. Based upon

19 See S. James, "Dura-Europos and the Chronology of Syria in the 250s ad," *Chiron* 15 (1985) 111–24; D. MacDonald, "Dating the Fall of Dura-Europos," *Historia* 35/1 (1986) 45–68. These authors independently reach similar conclusions regarding the dating of the destruction of Dura Europos and the supposed Persian occupation of the city in 253 c.e.

20 On the centrality of biblical texts in the Dura synagogue, see my *This Holy Place: On the Sanctity of the Synagogue during the Greco-Roman Period* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 1997) 141–46. On the methodology suggested in this article, see my "Art and the Liturgical Context of the Sepphoris Synagogue Mosaic," in *Galilee through the Centuries: Confluence of Cultures* (ed. E. M. Meyers; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1999) 227–37; idem, "Liturgical Interpretation of Synagogue Remains in Late Antique Palestine," in *Continuity and Renewal: Jews and Judaism in Byzantine-Christian Palestine* (ed. L. I. Levine; Jerusalem: Dinur Center and Ben Zvi Institute, 2004) 402–29 [Heb.].

21 Beineke Library, Inv. D. Pg. 25.

22 JQR 54 (1963–64) 100–109.

23 C. Torrey, "Parchments and Papyri," 417–19; idem, in Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, 259–60.

24 "Un Parchemin Liturgique Juif et la Gargote de la Synagogue a Doura-Europos," *Syria* 20/1 (1939) 23–34.

25 Sukenik, *Beit ha-Kneset*, 157–59.

Du Mesnil du Buisson's edition of the Dura parchment, the two greatest Talmudists of the twentieth century, Saul Lieberman and Louis Ginzberg, each independently offered some brief comments on rabbinic parallels to the parchment. Lieberman's findings were presented in a brief appendix to a 1940 Hebrew pamphlet published in Jerusalem, *A Lecture on the Yemenite Midrashim, Their Character and Value*. Ginzberg discussed the parchment in the course of his Hebrew *Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud*, published in New York in 1942.²⁶ The comments of Lieberman, Ginzberg, and later of archaeologist Sukenik (who had originally brought the parchment to Lieberman's attention)²⁷ are virtually unknown beyond the Hebrew-speaking academy. The most important study on this parchment, since Sukenik's study, was published in 1997 by Israeli art historian Shulamit Laderman, who built on Lieberman's discussion of the relationship between the Dura parchment and later liturgical poetry (*piyyut*). Laderman used the Dura parchment as a jumping-off point for interpreting the Dura paintings in terms of themes developed in *piyyut* literature.²⁸

Three fragments of this animal-skin parchment are extant. The largest and most complete, fragment "A," is 5.5 x 5 cm. Fragment "B," which is much less complete is 5 x 3.5 cm, and the third piece, called a "tiny scrap" in the final report, is only 1.3 x 0.8 cm.²⁹ Du Mesnil du Buisson suggested that fragments A and B are not contiguous (contra Torrey), which is clearly correct. The alignment suggested by Du Mesnil du Buisson, with which I concur, is based on the arc of a curved scratch that appears on both fragments. In the final report of manuscripts discovered at Dura, C. Bradford Welles rightly notes that "the upper fragment [frg. A] contains the top margin of the original sheet, and the lower fragment contains the bottom margin, probably."³⁰ The fragments are written by the same rather pedestrian hand. They are written in Jewish square script, called by the rabbis *Ktav Ashurit*, "Assyrian script," called today Jewish square script.³¹ The letter forms, written in black ink,

26 S. Lieberman, *Yemenite Midrashim: A Lecture on the Yemenite Midrashim, Their Character and Value* (Jerusalem: Bamberger and Wahrman, 1940) 40–41 [Heb.]; L. Ginzberg, *A Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1941) 3:355 [Heb.].

27 Lieberman thanks Sukenik for bringing the parchment and Du Mesnil du Buisson's publication to his attention. Sukenik was apparently unaware of Ginzberg's comments, which are couched in a literary commentary and hence not readily accessible to the nonspecialist.

28 See the recent discussion by S. Laderman, "A New Look at the Second Register of the West Wall in Dura Europos," *Cahiers Archéologiques* 45 (1997) 5–18.

29 The letter *bet* is readily seen on this fragment through computer enhancement, though its original location in the manuscript may not be determined.

30 C. B. Welles, R. O. Fink, and J. F. Gilliam, *Parchments and Papyri: The Excavations at Dura Europos—Final Report V, Part 1* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959) 75.

31 *m. Meg.* 1:8, 2:2.

are consistent with those that were used in Aramaic inscriptions within the synagogue, particularly those written in ink on two preserved ceiling tiles bearing Aramaic dedicatory inscriptions.³² There is evidence of scoring on the surface of the parchment, which parallels line-markings on the ceiling tiles.³³ Eight lines of fragment A and the very top of line 9 are extant. Seven lines of frg. B are extant. The preserved sections of the text are reasonably clear, particularly when enhanced through computer imaging. The last two lines of frg. B, as well as details of both fragments, were deciphered thanks to these technological advancements.

Fragment A:

1.	ברוך X מלך העולם	Blessed is X, king of the world/eternity
2.	חלק מזון התקין מ[חיה] ³⁴	apportioned food, provided sustenance
3.	... בני בשר בהמה ל ...	sons of flesh cattle to ...
4.	... יצר אדם לאכול מ ...	created man to eat of ...
5.	גויות רבאות ממ ...	many bodies of ...
6.	לברך כלם בהמות	to bless all cattle
7.	... ה
8.	ל תקן
9.	ל ... ק	...

Fragment B;

10.		for
11.	... ט[ה]הורת לא ³⁶	pure (animals) to (eat?)
12.	מכלכל	provides sustenance
13.	קטנות עם גדון[לות]	small and large
14.	כל חית השדה	all the animals of the field ...
15.	... ל מאכל טפם feed their young
16.	ושיר וברך	and sing and bless ³⁷

Even in this fragmentary state, this document provides ample evidence of the liturgical life of Jews at Dura. The language is rich in phraseology that

32 S. A. Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Scripts* (Leiden: Brill, 1971) 1:180—83.

33 See C. Sirat, *Les papyrus en caractères hébraïques trouvés en Égypte* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1985) 27, pl. 3.

34 So Sirat, *ibid.*, 27.

35 Sukenik: מ[חיה] לכל. Du Mesnil du Buisson: **מחיה לכל**.

36 Sukenik conjectures cleverly, “pure [animals] to eat: **כול [טה]ורת לא[כל]**. The right leg of the “hay” הורת [ט] is visible under computer enhancement. An alternate translation is “... pure, do not... .”

37 Alternately, **ישיר וברך** or **ישיר יברך**.

closely parallels rabbinic and Cairo Geniza documents. In fact, had this text been discovered in Tiberias, Pumbedita, or some other rabbinic center, no one would doubt that it was a rabbinic document. If it had been discovered in the Cairo Geniza, the Byzantine period providence of the text (though not the script) would not be doubted. For the sake of illustration, I will suggest some literary parallels to the text.

A-1. ברוך X מלך העולם “Blessed is X, king of the world/eternity . . .”

“Blessed” (ברוך) plus a divine name appears as an introductory formula in biblical and Second Temple period texts. The entire phrase, however, finds no parallel prior to the rabbinic introductory blessing formula “Blessed are you, Lord our God, king of the world/eternity.”³⁸ Reuven Kimelman notes that this formula first appears in rabbinic literature during the mid-third century.³⁹ Kimelman, with earlier interpreters, notes that the rabbinic formula certainly resonates with our text.

The use of abbreviations for divine names and for liturgical formulae is well known in rabbinic literature.⁴⁰ M. Beit-Arié notes that in a palimpsest that predates the eighth century, now in Munich, the sign X is used as an abbreviation for the divine name Elohim and that, in early Cairo Geniza documents, substituting the letter aleph, also for Elohim (and its derivative forms), is common. Beit-Arié is certainly correct, contrary to most previous interpreters, that the form following ברוך in



Fig. 3. *The Dura Europos Hebrew Liturgical Parchment.* (Courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.)

38 B. Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry* (Leiden: Brill, 1994) 72–78, esp. 76; J. Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns* (trans. R. Sarason; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977) 77–103.

39 y. *Berakhot* 9:1, 12d; b. *Berakhot* 40b. R. Kimelman, “Blessing Formulae and Divine Sovereignty in Rabbinic Literature,” 1–39 in *Liturgy in the Life of the Synagogue*, (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005).

40 On divine names, see: J. Z. Lauterbach, “Substitutes for the Tetragrammaton,” *PAAJR* 2 (1930–31) 39–67. E.g., t. *Shabbat* 13:4, and the parallels cited by Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-fshutah*, 3:205–6.

line 1 of the Dura parchment is to be read as an X.⁴¹ Comparison of this sign with the letter ^aaleph elsewhere in the parchment certainly suggests that it is an X, though the obvious similarity between an X and an aleph is clear.⁴² One wonders whether the use of this abbreviation at Dura reflects an attempt to avoid writing a divine name, as is clearly the case in the Munich palimpsest, paralleling (or perhaps signifying an even stronger connection to) rabbinic concerns known from Palestinian and Babylonian sources regarding the defilement of divine names and particularly regarding the writing of prayer texts.⁴³

The phrase “blessed is God, king of the world/eternity” (מלך העולם) is paralleled in an Aramaic dedicatory inscription uncovered adjacent to the synagogue in insula K 8. Joseph Naveh credibly reads the relevant section of the inscription as follows:

דכי[ר לטב קדם]	Remembered for good before
מרי ש[מיה אמן]	The Lord ⁴⁴ of heaven, amen

The Aramaic appellation “Lord of heaven” (מרי שמיה) appears in rabbinic sources, as well as in a papyrus from Egypt and a synagogue inscription from Horvat Amudim in the Upper Galilee.⁴⁵ While not an exact parallel to our Hebrew text, the sense of this inscription is quite similar in conception to that expressed in our parchment.

41 M. Beit-Arié, “The Munich Palimpsest: A Hebrew Scroll Written before the Eighth Century,” *Kirjat Sepher* 43 (1967—68) 415 [Heb.]. The Lone Exception is Teicher, “Ancient Eucharistic,” 100—109, who reads the X as representing *Christos*. Ginzberg, *A Commentary*, 3:355, writes:

It is interesting that on the parchment . . . the [divine] name does not appear. It rather begins: ברוד א' מלך העולם. Similarly, in the Erfurt manuscript of the Tosefta the [divine] name does not appear in a single blessing [formula] (and in the Tractate Berakhot approximately forty blessings are mentioned!). Even in the printed edition of the Tosefta the [divine] name was removed in most places. This is not because they [made a practice of] not writing the [divine] name, for [divine] names appear often in prayers and in Torah verses in the Tosefta. Rather, [they did not write the divine name] in blessings because it was their practice to abbreviate and to write [simply] “blessed” or “blessed are you.” (my translation)

42 See lines 4, 5.

43 See Lauterbach, *Substitutes*. E.g., *t. Shabbat* 13:4, and the parallels cited by Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-fshutah*, 3:205—6.

44 Or “master,” M. Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1990) 331.

45 J. Naveh, *On Stone and Mosaic: The Aramaic and Hebrew Inscriptions from Ancient Synagogues* (Israel: Maariv, 1978) 40—41 [Heb.], interpreted following M. Sokoloff, “Epigraphical Notes on the Palestinian Talmud,” *Bar Ilan Annual* 18—19 (1980) 218 n. 2 [Heb.]; J. Naveh, “The Aramaic and Hebrew Inscriptions from Ancient Synagogues,” *Eretz Israel* 20 (1989) 306—7 [Heb.].

A-2. חלק מזון התקין מ]חיה . . . “*apportioned food, provided sustenance . . .*”

The phrase “apportioned food” (חלק מזון) parallels the rabbinic “apportions food” (חלק מזון), which appears first in m. Sheviit 9:8 and later in Midrash Psalms 136: “. . . the Holy One, blessed be He, sits at the heights of the universe and apportions food (חלק מזון) to all living things.”⁴⁶ Lieberman notes that the formula “apportioned food” appears in Geniza fragments of the blessing after meals.⁴⁷ This text praises God, who “apportioned sustaining food for all that He created (רהתקין מזון מחיה לכל אשר ברא).”⁴⁸ This parallel adequately explains the letter mem at the end of this line of our parchment. It is likely that this final word may be read מחיה, “food.”

A-3. . . . בני בשר בהמה ל . . . “*sons of flesh cattle to . . .*”

“Sons of flesh” appears in the paragraph following the Alenu prayer, “and all sons of flesh will call upon your name.”⁴⁹ It is not otherwise a common idiom in rabbinic literature. The relationship between the terms in line A-3 is unclear. One might conjecture that the text read something like: “[gives to] sons of flesh cattle to [eat].”

A-4. . . . יצר אדם לאכול מ . . . “*created man to eat of . . .*”

The term יצר אדם, “created man,” is a common phrase in rabbinic liturgy. The phrase יצר אשר את האדם בחכמה appears, for example, in the blessing after meals as preserved in y. *Berakhot* 9:4, 14b. In b. *Ketubot* 8a this phrase appears as part of the marriage blessings:

- a. Blessed are you, Lord our God, king of the universe, creator of man (יצר אדם).
- b. Blessed are you, Lord our God, king of the universe, who created man (יצר את) (האדם), in his image a likeness of his form [woman], and established (התקין) it for him as an eternal structure.
- c. Blessed are you, Lord, creator of man (יצר אדם).

The appearance of the praises יצר את האדם and והתקין in such close proximity in the intermediate blessing (line b) parallels the language of our fragment, where התקין appears in line 2 and apparently in line 8.⁵⁰ This proximity does not seem to relate to function, however, as much as to shared liturgical vocabulary.

A-5. . . . גויות רבאות ממ “*many bodies of . . .*”

46 *Midrash Tehillim* (ed. S. Buber; Vilna: Romm; repr., New York: Om, 1947) 136.

47 Lieberman, *Yemenite Midrashim*.

48 Published by A. Marmorstein, “Shibolim” *Ha-Zofeh: Quartalis Hebraica* 10 (1926) 213. See also L. Finkelstein, “The Birkat Ha-Mazon,” *JQR* 8 (1928–29) 243, 246.

49 *Seder Avodat Yisrael* (ed. Z. Baer; Palestine: Schocken, 1937) 132.

50 The most recent discussion of this prayer and parallel uses is by M. Bar-Ilan, “The Occurrence and Significance of *Yotser ha’Adam* Benediction,” *HUCA* 56 (1985) 9–27 [Heb.].

Lieberman finds a general parallel to this verse in *y. Berakhot* 4:4, 8b in a version of the “short prayer” of the *Tefillah* (lines 2—3):

- a. צורכי עמך ישראל מרובין ודעתן קצרה
- b. אלא יר'מ'ה' אלהנו ואלהי אבותינו שתתן לכל בריה
- c. ובריה צרכיה ולכל גויה וגויה די מחסורה
- d. ברוך ה' כי שמעת קול תחנוני
- e. : ברוך אתה יי שומע תפילה :

- a. The needs of your people Israel are great and their understanding slackened
- b. May it be your will, Lord our God and God of our fathers, to give to each and every
- c. creature its needs, and to each and every body enough to sustain it.
- d. Blessed are you, Lord, for you heard the voice of my supplication(s).
- e. Blessed are you, Lord, who hears prayer.

L. Ginzberg went a step into higher criticism of the Talmud based on our fragment, conjecturing that this short prayer formula originated as a form of the blessing after meals. He based this on “a parchment that was discovered two years ago next to the synagogue of Dura Europos that parallels [מתאים] the short prayer.”⁵¹ Ginzberg conjectures that the opening and closing formulae of this prayer (lines a, d—e) were added to frame the earlier blessing after meals (lines b—c) and transform it into a “short prayer.” To his mind the “short prayer” achieved widespread acceptance in both Palestine and Babylonia precisely because it was based on a well-known version of the blessing after meals, to which an introductory formula was added. For Ginzberg, the Dura parchment is proof of the wide distribution of this conjectured early blessing after meals. This position is overstated, though, because the similarities between the Dura text as preserved and the “short prayer” are not that great. The maintenance of the aleph in the plural form of *רכאות* is not unusual in either Tannaitic Hebrew or in Palestinian or Babylonian Aramaic.

It does not seem to me that it is possible to suggest any real parallels to lines A-7—9 of frg. 1. Fragment 2 is less complete, though considerable information may be gleaned from it—especially using computer imaging. B-2, . . . לא [טהורת] may translate, with Sukenik, “Pure (animals) to (eat?),” maintaining the general theme of animal consumption, though “pure (things, animals, etc.) do not . . .” is just as possible. מכלכל “provides sustenance” in line B-3 parallels the phrase “provides sustenance for life with love,” בחסד in the *Tefillah* prayer. קטנות עם גדולות “the small and large,” in line B-4 is drawn

51 See Ginzberg, *A Commentary*, 3:354. Neither Ginzberg nor Lieberman cites the other, which suggests that these scholars reached their conclusions independently.

from Ps. 104: 25, “Yonder is the sea, great and wide, which teems with things innumerable, living things both small and large.” Line B-5, “All the animals of the field” (כל חית השדה) is a phrase that appears with some regularity in Scripture, appearing for the first time in Gen. 2: 19: “So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air.”⁵² Line B-6, . . . ל מאכל טפם . . . “ . . . feed their young” is based on a biblical idiom. In Gen. 47: 24 we read: “and for food for your young,” ולאכל לטפכם. Line B-7, ושיר וברך, “and sing and bless,” are part of a group of prayer terms often brought together in liturgical texts. So, for example, in the Qaddish prayer, God is praised as being “beyond all blessing and song (ברכתא ושירתא), praise and consolation that is uttered in the world.”⁵³

Thus, the Dura parchment is clearly related in language, form and content to rabbinic prayer texts. The text of our parchment is, like rabbinic prayer, a conglomeration of rabbinic and biblical formulae,⁵⁴ though ancient Jews certainly did not distinguish the two as clearly as modern academic scholars tend to do. This linguistic reality parallels the Dura paintings themselves, where biblical and legendary themes are freely intertwined. The use of the Hebrew language on our parchment is significant, for it is the only evidence of a Hebrew text from Dura. All of the inscriptions in or near the synagogue are in Aramaic, Greek, or Persian, and the only other document that appears to be Jewish, a parchment whose text has not yet been fully interpreted, is in Aramaic.⁵⁵ The letter script of this document suggests that it was copied at Dura, or within a community with ties with Dura Europos.

What kind of prayer is this? Following Du Mesnil du Buisson, who conferred with Chief Rabbi of France and Professor of Talmud Israel Levi, scholars of Judaic studies agree that this text is somehow related to the grace after meals, Birkat ha-Mazon. Classicist Torrey took a different tack.⁵⁶ He argued that the parchment should not be seen as a prayer or as a liturgical document:

The document seems to be concerned only with the eating of animal food, and to set forth in concise terms both the fact and the authority of the Jewish practice. . . . It may be suggested that the time and place were

52 See Jer. 12: 9; Ezek. 31: 6, 13.

53 *Seder Avodat Yisrael*, 75; David de Sola Pool, *The Old Jewish-Aramaic Prayer: The Kaddish* (Leipzig: Rudolf Haupt, 1909) 17—18, 34, 61—62, which includes discussion of Hebrew versions.

54 C. Rabin, “The Linguistic Investigation of the Language of Jewish Prayer,” in *Studies in Aggadah, Targum and Jewish Liturgy in Memory of Joseph Heinemann* (ed. J. J. Petuchowski and E. Fleischer; Jerusalem: Magnes and Hebrew Union College Press, 1981) 163—71 [Heb.].

55 J. T. Milik, “Parchemin judéo-araméen de Doura-Europos, an 200 ap. J.-C.,” *Syria* 45 (1968) 97—104. On languages used at Dura, see G. D. Kilpatrick, “Dura-Europos: The Parchments and the Papyri,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 5/3 (1964) 215—25.

56 Torrey, “Parchments and Papyri,” in *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Preliminary Report* (ed. M. I. Rostovtzeff et al.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936) 419.

perhaps likely to bring forth a tract of this nature. In Persia, on the other hand, the vegetarian doctrine had its able champion among the Greeks; it was in this same generation that Porphyry composed his treatise on abstaining from animal food.⁵⁷ Perhaps we have a text prepared for use in the Jewish school in Dura.

While following Torrey, Kraeling was clearly uncomfortable with the notion of separating the parchment from the synagogue and locating it within some “school” for which we have no archaeological evidence. He posits that, “if so, it may have belonged to the materials used in the Synagogue, though kept in the Elder’s residence [another place that has never been discovered!] or the school room.”⁵⁸ In a brief comment, Jacob Neusner takes Kraeling’s approach in a slightly different direction. While accepting that our fragment is related to the grace after meals, he suggests tentatively that “this may be an anti-Mithraistic polemical “blessing” condemning taurobolium.”⁵⁹ This is apparently based on the fact that a mithraeum is close by in Dura.⁶⁰ The predilection of some scholars to see polemic in every rabbinic tradition is not useful for understanding our text, however.⁶¹ Only a pagan philosophical elite doubted the acceptability of meat consumption.⁶²

Du Mesnil du Buisson went so far as to identify a kosher restaurant in the synagogue precinct, on the supposition that “it seems to us certain that Jewish travelers who found lodging in the Synagogue were able to get there suitable food, together with the ritual formulas to recite after the meal. Such is the explanation of the liturgical parchment that was found there.”⁶³ Though drawn

57 Torrey, “Parchments and Papyri,” in *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Preliminary Report* (ed. M. I. Rostovtzeff et al.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936) 419.

58 Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, 259.

59 J. Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia* (Leiden: Brill, 1971) 1:153. Taurobolium: the cultic slaughter of bulls.

60 On the relationships between the various religious buildings at Dura, see: M. H. Gates, “Dura-Europos: A Fortress of Syro-Mesopotamian Art,” *BA* 47/3 (1984) 166—81.

61 The eating of animals does not seem to have been an issue at Dura or for most other residents of the Roman Empire. Within the Dura mithraeum itself, two graffiti listing foods and their costs were uncovered. Meat appears on both lists. See: M. J. Vermaseren, ed., *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1956—60) nos. 64—65. One lists wine, meat, oil, wood, turnips . . . for prices that are illegible. The second lists meat for 19 dinars and 17 asses, a sauce for 1 dinar, paper for one ass, water and wood for one dinar each, and again wine for 28 dinars and 11 asses. Many thanks to Matthias Bode for this reference.

62 C. Osborne, “Ancient Vegetarianism,” *Food in Antiquity* (ed. J. Wilkins, D. Harvey, and M. Dobson; Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1995) 214—24, esp. 218—23 on Porphyry. See also P. Garnsey, *Food and Society in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 16—17, 83—95.

63 Du Mesnil du Buisson, “Un Parchemin Liturgique Juif,” 28. Translated by Teicher, *Eucharistic*, 102. Kraeling does not explain his implicit rejection of the interpretation that the fragment was related to the grace after meals. He seems to have been completely unaware of the opinions of Lieberman,

apparently from the structures of modern Jewish communities and modern blessing booklets, Du Mesnil du Buisson's suggestion is less far-fetched than it sounds. A kitchen was discovered adjacent to the Ostia synagogue.⁶⁴ Meals were eaten within Palestinian synagogues at least from the third century onward.⁶⁵ While the exact context is unclear, the Dura parchment suggests that Jews participated in meals where some form of grace was enacted, either within or in close proximity to the Dura synagogue.

We have seen that Ginzberg overstates the resemblance between our text and a version of the rabbinic "short prayer." Lieberman conjectures that the Dura parchments are a poetic rendition of the grace after meals for a special occasion. He assumes without discussion that the Dura parchment may be interpreted unproblematically in terms of Geniza documents that were copied centuries later (if not composed in later centuries as well). While parallels are obvious, analogous social performance of our text may not be assumed. Sukenik apparently recognized this, simply and correctly asserting that the fragments are "without a doubt part of a prayer text that is related to the blessing after meals" (my translation).⁶⁶

This parchment thus is very important evidence that the Durene Jewish community participated in a "Common Judaism"⁶⁷ that as early as the third century used liturgical forms that are known to have been central to the Sages. This parallels the evidence of the images found in the synagogue, where lore that is preserved in rabbinic sources and was well known by Jews beyond the close-knit rabbinic community found visual expression. The Dura parchment thus provides external support for the scholars, notably Kraeling, Sukenik, and Gutmann, who interpreted the Dura Europos synagogue paintings in light of rabbinic sources. Both the liturgical text (as much as we have of it) and the decoration of the synagogue reflect an amazing closeness to the world of the rabbinic Sages.

Ginzberg, and Sukenik.

64 M. Floriani Squarciapino, "The Synagogue at Ostia," *Archaeology* 16/3 (1963) 194–203; A. Runesson, "The Synagogue at Ancient Ostia: The Building and Its History from the First to the Fifth Century," in *The Synagogue of Ancient Ostia and the Jews of Rome: Interdisciplinary Studies* (Skrifter Utgivna av Svenska Institutet i Rome 457; ed. B. Olsson, D. Mitternacht, and O. Brandt; Stockholm: Paul Åströms, 2001) 46–49.

65 See, for example, m. Zavim 3:2; Bekhorot 5:5; Z. Safrai, "The Communal Functions of the Synagogue in the Land of Israel in the Rabbinic Period," in *Ancient Synagogues: Historical Analysis and Archaeological Discovery* (ed. D. Urman and P. V. M. Flesher; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 1:197.

66 Sukenik, *Beit ha-Kneset*, 158.

67 The term "Common Judaism" was coined by E. P. Sanders. The fullest statement is his *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 bce—66 ce* (London and Philadelphia: Trinity International, 1992).

III. Liturgy and the Remains of the Dura Synagogue Building

The scholars who have written about the synagogue of Dura Europos are completely correct in their claim that the building does not explicitly tell us very much about the liturgy⁶⁸ that took place there. The paintings nevertheless provide hints of the liturgical practice of this community, and inscriptions provide even more information. The Dura parchment is an important element of this tapestry, suggesting the possibility that parallels to rabbinic prayer and rabbinic ways of thinking might be fruitfully applied to the interpretation of this liturgical space. After a survey of liturgical themes that may be drawn from the remains of the synagogue proper, I will suggest some broader parallels to the themes and concerns of rabbinic prayer.

Within the space of the synagogue hall, the large aedicula dominates the center of the western wall of the synagogue. It is the focal point of the hall and keystone of the wall paintings. The presence of Scripture is celebrated through this massive ark, which the excavators believe was draped in an ornate curtain. Scripture as refracted through Jewish lore (the *aggadah*) is projected out onto the walls of the synagogue, pointing to its centrality in the ritual life of the community.

The shrine is called a *beit arona* in one of the Aramaic dedicatory inscriptions that were somewhat haphazardly painted on its facade.⁶⁹ The Aramaic inscription reads:

[I . . .] donated (or, made) the *beit arona*. Joseph son of Abba. . . .

The term *arona* to describe the shrine is significant, because it draws a connection between the Dura “ark” and the Ark of the Covenant.⁷⁰ The Ark of the Covenant, formed as a Torah shrine, appears prominently in the wall paintings. We see it in West wall panel 8, set within the Tabernacle, with Aaron the priest standing to its right. The rounded gable of this ark contains the image of a menorah. The ark is also shown vanquishing the Temple of Dagon in Ashdod (WB 4)⁷¹ and in North wall panel 2, the defeat of the Israelites at Eben-Ezer (NB 1).⁷² This sort of correspondence between the synagogue

68 Under the rubric of liturgy, I place all texts and behaviors related to the ritual event, breaking down the traditional Jewish distinction between prayer and study. This holistic approach includes gestures (particularly gestures of approach and recession), the rehearsal of liturgical texts, Scripture reading, homiletics, and where available music and other aspects of performance.

69 C. Torrey, “The Aramaic Texts, ibn C. H. Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, 269; Naveh, *On Stone and Mosaic*, 133.

70 As I have demonstrated in *This Holy Place*, 80.

71 The designation used by Kraeling, West wall, band B, panel 4.

72 These images do not suggest the existence of an ornate ceremony for the entrance and removal of the Torah from the synagogue shrine. Cf. J. Gutmann, “Programmatic Painting in the Dura Synagogue,” in *The Dura Europos Synagogue* (ed. J. Gutmann; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1973)

shrine and the Ark of the Covenant is expressed in rabbinic literature as well, as in the comment of Rabbi Huna the Elder of Sepphoris, who is said to have lamented on the occasion of a public fast that:

Our fathers covered it (the Ark of the Covenant) with gold, and we cover it (the Torah ark) with ashes.⁷³

The iconographic correspondence between the Torah shrine at Dura and the image of the Temple is also seen in the entrance portal of the Temple illustrated on the face of the Torah ark. Like the Torah shrine, it is crowned with a large conch shell.⁷⁴

The paintings at the center of the western wall were arrayed to highlight the centrality of the Torah shrine. Two rectangular panels containing portraits of standing men, one above the other, were placed on either side of a central panel above the ark, a symmetry that is unknown elsewhere in the synagogue. Each faces frontally, “looking” outward from his panel. These images are more iconic than narrative, making the identification of these biblical characters difficult for modern scholars. One image is of particular relevance to us. Above and to the right of the Torah shrine (Wing panel III), the image of a man holding a biblical scroll emphasizes the significance of Scripture in the synagogue. The community’s intimate knowledge of biblical scrolls is made clear in this image. The text of Scripture is shown bleeding through the back of the parchment, a phenomenon that is common with modern biblical scrolls as well.⁷⁵ By showing this detail, our artist emphasizes the words on the scroll even as its text is turned toward the reader. The animal skin upon which our liturgical parchment was copied is important evidence for the types of holy books used at Dura and sheds light on the material of the biblical scroll illustrated here. Similarly, this illustration teaches us about the size of

147—48; idem, *The Dura-Europos Synagogue: A Reevaluation (1932—1992)* (Atlanta: Scholar’s Press, 1992) xxi. In the most recent version, “The Synagogue of Dura Europos,” 81—82. On early Torah ceremonies, see Fine, *This Holy Place*, 77; R. Langer, “From Study of Scripture to a Reenactment of Sinai: The Emergence of the Synagogue Torah Service,” *Worship* 72/1 (1998) 43—67, and her contribution to this volume (pp. 121—159).

73 y. Taan. 2:1, 65a. See my *This Holy Place*, 89—80, 145.

74 The conch was a form used to frame religious images during Greco-Roman antiquity. It appears often within other religious buildings of Dura Europos. See Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, 22—25, 55—61; S. Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture: Alexander through the Parthians* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) 89, 97, 107—8, 110, 113—14, 116, 118, 120, 128, and bibliography cited there. See M. Bratschkova, “Die Muschel in der antiken Kunst,” *Bulletin de l’Institut Archeologique Bulgare* 12/1 (1938) 1—121.

75 Kraeling argues against this being an illustration of a Torah scroll on the basis of the fact that no supporting staves are visible (*The Synagogue*, 234 n. 993). Such staves are found on modern Torah scrolls of later invention and are not used by numerous Near Eastern communities. Note that biblical scrolls from Qumran had no such staves.

the Durene scrolls.⁷⁶ Extant Jewish and non-Jewish scrolls from this period did not exceed 39 cm in length,⁷⁷ as is the case of the scroll in proportion to the man's forearm. The intimate knowledge of the community with biblical scrolls is made clear in this image.

Garments that are very similar to those illustrated in the synagogue (and throughout Dura Europos) were uncovered at Dura.⁷⁸ The man is illustrated with fringes at the right corner of his four-cornered mantle, in keeping with Num. 15: 37—41. Elsewhere in the Dura synagogue paintings, we find fringes on the corners of the garments of Moses as he leads the Israelites through the Red Sea (Western wall, register A, Moses on Mt. Sinai [Wing panel II] as well).⁷⁹ This is not, of course, a prayer shawl in the sense of the later Jewish ritual garment. There was no distinctive Jewish costume during antiquity.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the visible fringe is a rather quiet insider reference to Jewish practice that might easily be missed by those not cognizant of Jewish practice. Mantles (*talitot*) that bear great affinity to those illustrated at Dura were uncovered among the remains of the Bar Kokhba era rebels at Wadi Murabbaat in the Judean Desert, though no ritual fringes were attached to these mantles. Also discovered was a bundle of wool dyed purple that Y. Yadin identifies as ritual fringes that were being prepared for attachment to garments.⁸¹ The garments illustrated at Dura thus find an important parallel in the material culture of late antique Jewish Palestine. Similarly, the man's

76 The image is proportional to the size of the scroll that he holds. On scroll sizes, see S. Fine and M. Della Pergola, "The Ostia Synagogue and Its Torah Shrine," in *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (ed. J. Goodnick Westenholz; Jerusalem: Bible Lands Museum) 42—57.

77 *Ibid.*, 57.

78 See R. Pfister and L. Bellinger, *The Textiles: The Excavations at Dura-Europos— Final Report iv, Part 2* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945) 10—12, esp. tunic #1, pl. 5. Even as they provide concrete parallels to the garments illustrated in the wall paintings, our authors caution that the paintings "may be copied from earlier models" (p. 10). See B. Goldman, "The Dura Synagogue Costumes and Parthian Art," in *The Dura-Europos Synagogue: A Re-evaluation* (ed. J. Gutmann; Chambersburg, Penn.: American Academy of Religion, 1972) 52—77; *idem*, "Greco-Roman Dress in Syro-Mesopotamia," in *The World of Roman Costume* (ed. J. L. Sebesta and L. Bonfante; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994) 163—81; L. A. Roussin, "Costume in Roman Palestine: Archaeological Remains and the Evidence of the Mishnah," in *The World of Roman Costume*, 182—90.

79 Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, 81 n. 239, suggests a Palmyrene parallel to the fringes, concluding that "in all probability those viewing the paintings would take the threads to represent the 'fringes,' but whether they were included by the artists for this purpose is not entirely clear."

80 S. Safrai and Z. Safrai, *The Haggadah of the Sages: The Passover Haggadah* (Jerusalem: Carta, 1998) 133 n. 14 [Heb.], and the bibliography cited there.

81 Y. Yadin, *The Finds from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1963) 1:226—58, 289—92 [Heb.]; *idem*, *Bar-Kokhba: The Rediscovery of the Legendary Hero of the Second Jewish Revolt against Rome* (New York: Random, 1971) 81—85.

hairstyle is consistent with hairstyles illustrated throughout Dura Europos and the Roman east.⁸² This is truly a man of his place and time.

Who is the man holding the scroll? Scholars have posited every possible identification—any biblical character who at any time carried a scroll.⁸³



Fig. 4. Moses with a scroll, Dura Europos Synagogue (courtesy of the E. R. Good-enough estate). Photograph by Fred Anderegg.

One scholar went so far as to suggest that the man is a rabbinic Sage, Rabbi Judah the Prince, proclaiming the Oral Torah.⁸⁴ Every narrative image in the synagogue illustrates a biblical character, so it is reasonable to suggest that our man with a scroll is a biblical character as well. Kraeling debated whether to identify this image as Moses or as Ezra—Moses on the basis of Exodus 20 and its later interpretations and Ezra on the basis of Nehemiah 8. He eventually chose Ezra, mainly because no biblical text explicitly describes Moses reading the Torah!⁸⁵ I suggest that this image should be identified as none other than Moses, the archetypal Sage in Second Temple and rabbinic times. The rabbinic notion of transmission is that “Moses received Torah from Sinai, and passed it on to Joshua, and Joshua to the Elders,” through the prophets to the earliest proto-Sages (the “Men of the Great Assembly”), and continuing unbroken to rabbis in our own day.⁸⁶ The revelation of Torah at Sinai through Moses is expressed in Nehemiah 8, where the public reading of Scripture on the first day of the seventh month is led by Ezra, the “priest and the scribe.” This event is clearly modeled on

the Sinaitic prototype and derives its authority from the “book of Moses.”⁸⁷ From tannaitic times onward, the public reading of Torah has been modeled on

82 Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, 371–72. On the significance of hairstyles for art-historical interpretation, see R. Brilliant, “Hairiness: A Matter of Style and Substance in Roman Portraits,” *Eius Virtutis Studiosi: Classical and Postclassical Studies in Memory of Frank Edward Brown (1098–1988)* (ed. R. T. Scott, A. R. Scott; Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1993) 303–14.

83 See Gutmann, “Early Synagogue and Jewish Catacomb Art and Its Relation to Christian Art,” 1317.

84 L. Denqueker, “Le Zodiaque de la Synagogue de Beth Alpha et la Midrash,” *Bijdragen, tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie* 47 (1986) 26. Denqueker further identifies the figure in Wing panel IV as Rabban Gamaliel proclaiming the lunar calendar.

85 Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, 234.

86 m. Avot 1: 1. See G. D. Cohen’s comments in his edition of Abraham Ibn Daud, *The Book of Tradition* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1967) xliii–lxii.

87 See most recently H. Najman, “Torah of Moses: Pseudonymous Attribution in Second

Nehemiah 8, and numerous sources beginning with Josephus and the Acts of the Apostles attribute the institution of public Torah-reading to Moses himself.⁸⁸ The “man with the scroll” at Dura is, then, both Moses and, derivatively, a Torah-reader who in some way carries the authority of Moses by virtue of his public reading and/ or interpretation of Scripture in third-century Dura Europos. The Jews of Dura projected their physical appearance onto Moses and the other biblical characters in a visual manner, just as Second Temple and rabbinic lore assumed continuity between the mores and material culture of their own world and that of the biblical ancestors.⁸⁹

This image of Moses is the visual equivalent of rabbinic texts that consistently present Moses in contemporizing terms, and even as a Sage in Roman garb. A superb example of the latter appears in an early liturgical poem:

Moses was pleased with the gift that you bestowed upon him,
For you called him a faithful servant.

A wreath of glory⁹⁰ you placed on his head,
As he stood before you on Mt. Sinai.⁹¹

Here Moses’ master, God, praises him and presents him with a wreath as a sign of divine pleasure and authority. Similar use of wreaths is well known from the Greco-Roman world.⁹² The poet asks us to imagine Moses with a

Temple Writings,” in *Interpretation of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity: Studies in Language and Tradition* (ed. C. A. Evans; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) 202–16. For Ezra in rabbinic literature, see L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1954) 4:354–59, 6:441–49.

88 Against Apion, 2.175; Acts 15:21, y. Meg. 4:1, 75a; b. Baba Qama 82a. See I. Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History* (trans. R. P. Scheindlin; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993) 130 pp. 3–6.

89 The literature on this type of projection is vast. For Josephus, see: L. Feldman, *Josephus’ Interpretation of the Bible* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998); for targumic literature: S. Fine, “‘Their Faces Shine with the Brightness of the Firmament’: Study Houses and Synagogues in the Targumim to the Pentateuch,” in *Bible Translation in Context* (Studies and Texts in Jewish History and Culture 10; ed. F. W. Knobloch; Bethesda, Md.: University Press of Maryland, 2002) 63–92. For medieval examples, see my “Halakhic Motif in Jewish Iconography: Matzah-Baking in Late Medieval Southern Germany,” in *A Crown for a King: Studies in Memory of Prof. Stephen S. Kayser* (ed. S. Fine, S. Sabar, and W. Kramer; Berkeley: Magnes Museum / Jerusalem: Gefen, 2000) 111.

90 See 1QS 4:7–8; 1QH^a 17:25–26; 1Q28b 4:2; and the discussion by D. Flusser in his introduction to H. Schreckenberg and K. Schubert, *Jewish Historiography and Iconography in Early and Medieval Christianity* (Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum / Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) xvii. See also M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli, and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Traditional Press, 1982) 642; Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*, 260.

91 Incorporated into the Sabbath morning *Tefillah*. See, for example, *Seder Avodat Israel*, 219.

92 K. Baus, *Der Kranz in Antike und Christentum* (Bonn, 1940); R. E. Kolarik, “Wreath,” *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (ed. A. P. Kazhdan; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 2205.

wreath on his head, which parallels very nicely our image of the Law-giver in his Roman garments at Dura.

The Durene assumption that biblical characters wore ritual fringes is paralleled in rabbinic sources. Among the most piquant, Babylonian Talmud *Baba Batra* 73b–74a describes one Rabba bar Hanna, who viewed “those who died in the desert” and tried, unsuccessfully, to take a bit of the blue string from their ritual fringes.⁹³ In short, the images at Dura, and particularly that of Moses with the Torah scroll, suggest a strong parallel with rabbinic assumptions and patterns of behavior in matters of dress and performance. This has implications for the performance of other commandments as well.⁹⁴

Since our parchment establishes that at least some Durene Jews prayed in Hebrew, it seems reasonable to suggest that they may also have recited Scripture in that language. The longer Aramaic labels on some of the synagogue’s images hint that an Aramaic translation or paraphrase may also have been recited at Dura—whether together with the Hebrew, as was rabbinic practice in both Palestine and in Babylonia, or perhaps (less likely) on its own. Between the legs of Moses in the Exodus scene we read: רבוע יאמא משה כד נפק מן מצרים. That is, “Moses when he went out of Egypt and split the sea.”⁹⁵ Above his head later in this scene, we find: משה כד ב[ו]ע יאמא. “Moses when he split the sea.”⁹⁶ This language is very close to Aramaic paraphrases of the Torah. Targum Neofiti, the only complete Palestinian paraphrase of the Torah, comments on *Exod.* 14: 16: “Raise your staff and incline your hand over the sea and split it (רבוע יתה).”⁹⁷ Targum Onkelos, which was essentially Babylonian, preserves a similar reading.⁹⁸ Comparing the language mix in the synagogue with the languages used in documents recovered throughout Dura Europos, George D. Kilpatrick finds that “it is remarkable that the largest number of texts is in Aramaic.”⁹⁹ Aramaic was a significant language among the Jews of this community and, like the liturgical use of Hebrew, distinguished them from their neighbors.

93 The most recent discussion of this text is D. Stein, “Believing is Seeing: *Baba Batra* 73a–75b,” *Jerusalem Studies in Hebrew Literature* 17 (1999) 9–32 [Heb.].

94 Scholars have interpreted the cloth-covered structure next to “Moses” as a scroll chest, which is possible, though not conclusive. See Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, 233–34.

95 WA3. Torrey, “The Aramaic Texts,” 269.

96 WA3. Torrey, “The Aramaic Texts,” 270.

97 Neophyti 1: Targum Palestinense Ms de la Biblioteca Vaticana (ed. A. Díez Macho; Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1968) ad loc.; Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance (ed. E. G. Clarke; Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav, 1984) ad loc. This parallel was pointed out to me by the late Jonas Greenfield.

98 רבועי. See *The Bible in Aramaic I: The Pentateuch according to Targum Onkelos* (ed. A. Sperber; Leiden: Brill, 1959) ad loc.

99 Kilpatrick, “Dura-Europos: The Parchments and the Papyri,” 216.

The Dura paintings also seem to illustrate prayer postures that were known, and perhaps practiced, by Jews at Dura. In the image of “The Wilderness Encampment and the Miraculous Well of Be’er”¹⁰⁰ we find personifications of each of the twelve tribes within their tents, their arms raised in an *orans* posture, their hands lifted upward toward heaven, as water flows from the well to each tribe. Similarly, in the Ezekiel panel, the revived “dry bones”: of the Ezekiel panel (NC1) also stand in an *orans* posture. Is this indicative of a prayer stance taken by the Durene Jews, or is it simply a visual convention? Significantly, Christians assumed this stance; it appears in the Dura church in the image of Jesus walking on water.¹⁰¹ Did Jews employ this gesture as well? Welles suggests that one of the extant Aramaic dedicatory ceiling tiles (“B”) concludes: [פּרְסִין יְדִידָהָן] . . . בְּכֹל שַׁבָּת “each Sabbath . . . spreading out [their hands] in it (in prayer).” Our author is quite cautious in his interpretation:

In the second half of the line the two letters פּרְס are distinct. Since the suffixed pronoun at the beginning of line 9 presumably refers to the Synagogue, it is tempting to conjecture that the two letters named belong to some form of the verb פּרְס, which is so often used in the phrase “spreading out the hands in prayer.” This is mere conjecture and very possibly wrong.¹⁰²

If Welles is right, however, this tile nicely parallels the images of biblical ancestors adapting the *orans* position. Rabbinic literature of this period does not mention the *orans* as a prayer stance, though silence is not always evidence of historical fact.¹⁰³ Synagogue art from Palestine indicates that the *orans* position may have been used by Jews during the fifth or sixth century.¹⁰⁴ Was this prayer stance assumed by Jews at Dura as well?

Alternately, the image identified by Kraeling as Abraham in Wing panel IV stands with his hands clasped under his robe.¹⁰⁵ This clasping of hands was a prayer stance in the Babylonian diaspora. *B. Shabbat* 10a relates the practice of two Babylonian Amoraim:

100 WB1.

101 C. H. Kraeling, *The Christian Building*, with a contribution by C. Bradford Welles (New Haven: Dura Europos, 1967) pls. 36–37. Compare Kraeling’s comments, p. 63. Kraeling suggests that the hands are “raised high in a gesture of astonishment and all face toward Christ and Peter in the lower zone.” Even if he is correct, it seems to me that this “astonishment” (if that is what it is!) is expressed through a known liturgical form, superimposing the prayer stance of this community onto the biblical scene.

102 In Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, 266. Cf. Naveh, *On Stone and Mosaic*, 127–30.

103 Compare U. Ehrlich, *The Non-Verbal Language of Jewish Prayer* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1999) 106–15 [Heb.].

104 Fine, “The Liturgical.”

105 For the varied identifications of this image, see Gutmann, *The Dura-Europos Synagogue: A Re-evaluation*, 142.

When Rabba prayed, he removed his cloak, folded his hands and prayed, saying, “[I pray] like a slave before his master.”

Said Rav Ashi: I saw Rav Kahana; when there was trouble in the world, he removed his cloak, folded his hands and prayed, saying, “[I pray] like a slave before his master.”¹⁰⁶

Did Jews at Dura stand with hands folded in prayer, or perhaps did they assumed the orans posture? Perhaps neither, and perhaps both, depending on their understanding of the meaning of the gestures. Perhaps both approaches were taken, just as three languages were spoken by Jews who frequented the synagogue. Perhaps some members of the community assumed one stance, and some, the other. Being a border city, Dura certainly had a mixed Jewish population, and that population must have had varied customs.

The Dura paintings have long served as a sort of Rorschach test for modern identities and scholarly approaches (including, of course, my own). As with the Sepphoris synagogue mosaic, intricate global approaches are more indicative of Renaissance sensibilities and of modern scholarly modes of thought than ancient Jewish ones.¹⁰⁷ The fact that only the western wall is fully preserved, slices of the side walls, and virtually none of the back wall is complicated by problems of identifying some of the less-complete images. The extant Dura synagogue paintings do not seem to reflect a carefully structured consecutive order, on the pattern of a modern comic book or art-history survey (or the final report of the Dura synagogue), where image number 1 leads to image number 2, and so on. It is my sense that once the Torah shrine paintings, the panel above them, and the four flanking images of men were in place, the designer(s), perhaps the “building committee” listed on the dedicatory ceiling tiles, arranged groups of somewhat related images on the walls. Some images, such as those detailing the movements of the Ark of the Covenant, were grouped together, and others stood alone. The image of Moses with the scroll, the crossing of the sea, and Pharaoh’s daughter rescuing Moses are grouped on the same wall to the right of the Torah shrine; this does not seem haphazard to me. The second band of the western wall is unified by the fact that each scene contains a gabled image of the Tabernacle or the Temple, with the gabled Temple of Dagon to the far right. The placement of Samuel anointing David above the chair where the synagogue leader, Samuel, seems to have sat, may have had local political implications; as would images of local Dura gods destroyed in the Temple of Dagon and of the unsuccessful sacrifice by the priests of Baal (temples to the Palmyrene gods, including Bel

106 Ibid., 143; Ehrlich, *The Non-Verbal Language of Jewish Prayer*, 108-9.

107 E.g., G. Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (London: Dent / New York: Dutton, 1949); Wharton, *Refiguring*, 43.

and Zeus-Kyrios-Baalshamin, existed at Dura).¹⁰⁸ These discredited deities are set in opposition to images from the biblical cult, from Elijah's successful sacrifice, to Aaron at the Tabernacle, and the averted sacrifice (aqedah) of Isaac, and images of the Temple and menorah on the face of the Torah shrine.¹⁰⁹ Unfortunately, the central panel of the western wall, just above the Torah shrine, was repainted so often that it is hard to know what was originally there. The fact that this area was reworked, however, is evidence of how important this area of the paintings was to the community. Of particular interest is the image of David playing his harp. This image is an important connection to the themes of David as psalmist, king, and messiah. The artistically adept might have recognized formal similarities between David and Orpheus, though others probably did not take notice.¹¹⁰ That certain paintings were particularly popular is reflected in the Persian graffiti that is preserved on them. Not surprisingly, these panels were easily within reach because they were in the lowest register. Were they popular because they were low on the wall, or were they in the bottom register because the themes were popular? This we shall never know, just as we shall never know what treasures existed on the 40 or 50 percent of the walls, which did not survive.

There is no overarching, global theme to the paintings—as much as many modern scholars would like to find one. One might imagine a preacher within the synagogue turning to the images and using them to homiletic effect—and to different effects, according to the content of his homily. The use of synagogue decorations as “props” by homilists is known from rabbinic sources, as is a similar process within somewhat later church contexts.¹¹¹ There was no one exclusive meaning for each image, but, rather, a range of interconnected interpretations were possible.¹¹² The preacher likely interpreted the images differently depending on what lesson he was teaching, the audience, the liturgical calendar, or the particular text that he was explicating. The vast quantity of images at Dura certainly facilitate an astonishing wide variety of possibilities! This approach fits well with the rabbinic midrashic approach to Scripture itself. Wharton associates this with chaos theories in modern

108 L. Dirven, *The Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos: A Study of Religious Interaction in Roman Syria* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), esp. 67–98, 115–17. Wharton, *Refiguring*, 45. See now J. Elsner, “Cultural Resistance and the Visual Image: The Case of Dura Europos,” *Classical Philology* 96/3 (2001) 281. See also pp. 282–99.

109 WB1, WB2, WB3, SC4.

110 P. V. M. Flesher, “Rereading the Reredos: David, Orpheus, and Messianism in the Dura Europos Synagogue,” in *Ancient Synagogues: Historical Analysis and Archaeological Discovery* (ed. D. Urman and P. V. M. Flesher; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 2:346–66.

111 M. Bregman, “The Darshan: Preacher and Teacher of Talmudic Times,” *The Melton Journal* 14 (1982) posted at <http://www.jtsa.edu/melton/bestof/darshan.html>.

112 Wharton, *Refiguring*, 45–47; S. Fine, “Art and the Liturgical Context.”



Fig. 5. *The Ark of the Covenant in the Temple of Dagon, Dura Europos Synagogue* (reprinted courtesy of the E. R. Goodenough estate). Photograph by Fred Andereg.

literary scholarship, though the model proposed here fits better with the “organic thinking” that Max Kadushin and Isaak Heinemann¹¹³ in somewhat different ways suggested were operative in rabbinic thought. This hypothesis would be reasonable as interpretations of the synagogue without the Dura parchments. Once again, the Dura liturgical parchment, containing prayer formulae so close to the world of the rabbinic Sages, warrants a more sustained interpretation of the synagogue in light of rabbinic literature.

The Dura synagogue served not only as a setting for study and exegesis but for liturgical prayer in the more-specific sense of the word. This, it seems to me, is one of the lessons of the Dura parchment: that at least some Jews in Dura prayed in forms that we know from rabbinic circles. For strictly heuristic purposes, let us imagine that the Dura Jewish community also prayed the most central rabbinic prayer, the *Tefillah*.¹¹⁴ With the weight that I have given here

113 Wharton (*Refiguring*) associates this multiplicity of meanings with chaos theories in modern literary scholarship. It fits better with the “organic thinking” that Max Kadushin and Isaak Heinemann (in somewhat different ways) suggest were operative in rabbinic thought. See M. Kadushin, *The Rabbinic Mind* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1952) and *Worship and Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964); I. Heinemann, *Darkhei ha-Aggadah* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1974).

114 J. Heinemann has demonstrated the close formal relationship between the grace after meals, the *Tefillah*, and other synagogue-related liturgical texts. See: *Studies in Jewish Literature* (ed. A. Shinan; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1981) 3–11 [Heb.].

to the Dura parchment, this is not as far-fetched as it might sound—especially because the *Tefillah* so well encapsulates the central themes of Jewish theology. How would the Dura wall paintings function for a community that, say, recited the weekday *Tefillah* prayer together in the synagogue?¹¹⁵

First of all, the language of our prayer text would have been quite recognizable to at least portions of the Dura community. The formulae and language of our Dura parchment are closely related to those of rabbinic prayer, as we have seen. Regarding the content, the power of the divine is expressed throughout this text, as it is in our images. The references to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the *Tefillah* would find resonance in the paintings, where the Binding of Isaac, Abraham, and Jacob's ladder all appear. This focus on biblical ancestors of heroic stature as the backdrop for contemporary religion is found in both the paintings and the text. Similarly, David the messiah and the rebuilding of the Temple are central to both.¹¹⁶ The focus on knowledge and Torah finds parallels in the project as a whole, and particularly in the image of "Moses" with the scroll.¹¹⁷ Hope for health and the resurrection of the dead are expressed in the images of Elijah revivifying the dead child and the literal resurrection illustrated in Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones. This theme was emphasized by one of the Persian graffiti. Above Elijah's right thigh we read: "Praise to God, praise! For life, life eternally he gives (. . . ??)."¹¹⁸ The curse against slanderers and the wicked and, in some Cairo Geniza versions, against the *notsrim* and the *minim*, "the Christians and heretics,"¹¹⁹ might be directed against Jews who behaved poorly (none of whom, "obviously," appears on the walls), against the evil Haman, the dead Egyptians at the Sea, against the "idoltrous" Palmyrenes and worshipers of Baal, and against the Mithraites (the vanquished Dagon being represented, "coincidentally," by deities of polytheistic communities at Dura). There is no direct reference

115 For the purpose of this exercise, I will use the standard *Ashkenazi* version of the *Tefillah* as pronounced today, since I am interested in only general correspondences. Variance between the various versions, of course, is far less than the general agreement. See *Seder °Avodat Yisrael*, 87–104.

116 David's role as messiah is emphasized in this panel, and its inscription reads, "Samuel when he anointed (נִשְׁמָה) David." See Torrey, *The Synagogue*, 273. Fleisher, "Rereading the Reredos: David, Orpheus, and Messianism," underplays messianic connotations of the harp-playing David.

117 See Wharton, *Refiguring*, 43.

118 Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, 315. See also p. 264, cited uncritically by J. Gutmann ("The Synagogue of Dura Europos," 82). See the opinion of J. Greenfield and J. Naveh in Naveh, *On Stone*, 127, 131.

119 S. Schechter, "Genizah Specimens," *JQR* 10 (1898) 657, 659. J. Mann, "Genizah Fragments of the Palestinian Order of the Service," *HUCA* 2 (1925) 306; A. Marmorstein, "The Amidah of the Public Fast Days," *JQR* 15 (1924) 415–17. It is not sure, however, that the Geniza formulations predate the Byzantine period. See my "Non-Jews in the Synagogues of Palestine: Rabbinic and Archaeological Perspectives," in *Jews, Christians and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction during the Greco-Roman Period* (ed. S. Fine; London: Routledge, 1999) 234.



Fig. 6. Ezekiel's Vision of the Dry Bones (reprinted courtesy of the E. R. Goodenough estate). Photograph by Fred Andereg.

to Christians, who may simply be ignored (as they generally were by third century rabbis).¹²⁰ The notion that the Bible, projected through the prism of midrashic tradition, was a distinctly Jewish possession, a leitmotif of these images, might to some degree suggest an opaque response to this neighboring group.¹²¹ The “righteous and godly” are, of course, illustrated on every wall. The “righteous” include all of the biblical heroes and their exploits. Finally, this prayer would be recited facing in the direction of the Torah shrine, which at Dura stood on the western, Jerusalem-aligned wall of the synagogue.¹²² On the face of this shrine is the image of the Temple, the menorah, and the *aqedah*, the intended sacrifice of Isaac (which 2 Chr 3:1 and later Jewish tradition place on the Temple Mount). Referring to the restoration of the Temple and its cult, the *Tefillah* says, using a visual metaphor that fits well with our Dura shrine, “May our eyes behold your return in mercy to Zion.” In short, there are few images in the Dura paintings that could not somehow relate to the themes of this prayer—which itself was not recited without the frame of

120 See my “Between Texts and Archaeology: Nabratein and Jacob of Kefar Nevoiraia in Rabbinic Literature,” in *Ancient Synagogue Excavations at En-Nabratein, Upper Galilee, 1980–81* (ed. E. M. and C. L. Meyers; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, forthcoming).

121 The fact that no image in the Dura church is drawn from the Old Testament sets a stark contrast between the fine quality of the synagogue paintings and the lower quality of New Testament images used by Christians. See Kraeling, *The Christian Building*, passim.

122 *t. Berakhot* 3:15–16; *t. Megillah* 2:18; *This Holy Place*, 45–46, 51–53, 112–17.

other liturgical compositions (including biblical texts) and, on specific occasions, Scripture-reading and translation.

Again, I am not suggesting that the Jews at Dura necessarily recited the rabbinic *Tefillah*, and I am not suggesting that the text of the *Tefillah* was intentionally encoded in these paintings. I am only suggesting that strong thematic parallels may be drawn between these two “documents” of late antique synagogue liturgy. The themes of the *Tefillah* are the basic building blocks of rabbinic prayer. Jews in the frontier city of Dura Europos participated with the Sages in a kind of Jewish *koiné*, a shared or common religion, that included theological, midrashic, and liturgical components that were not inconsistent with these themes.

The Dura Europos liturgical parchment provides a powerful key for the interpretation of the Dura synagogue and its paintings. This fragment firmly anchors the community at Dura within a religious world that was shared by the rabbinic Sages of Babylonia and Palestine. The proximity of this fragment to the world of the rabbinic Sages is paralleled in the content of the paintings themselves, particularly in regard to liturgical issues. In comparing the paintings to the central rabbinic prayer, the *Tefillah*, I have attempted to show the close conceptual proximity between the themes inherent in that text and the Dura synagogue paintings. It is my firm belief that the remains of prayer texts at Dura and the synagogue furnishings form a holistic whole, “a single symbolic matrix” for religious experience,

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Readers may visit Professor Fine's website at <<<http://www.cojs.info/stevefine>>>.

Music from a Confined Space: Salomone Rossi's *Ha-shirim asher lishlomoh* (1622/23) and the Mantuan Ghetto

By Stefano Patuzzi

Indeed, I am convinced that from the day this composition is published, those who learn [the science of music] will multiply in Israel in order to sing to the magnificence of our God by using them and others like them.

(Leon Modena, Foreword to *Ha-shirim asher lishlomoh*)¹

Why Mantua

In discussing methodological problems that are inherent in dealing with the music of ancient times, Joachim Braun points out that

The acoustic restoration of musical events is impossible not only because the source material is absent in the first place, but primarily because the historical situation, the social circumstances, and the listeners' psychological disposition and corresponding reaction to this music are forever beyond our reach. The acoustic ecology of this ancient past was radically different from our own. We today can hardly imagine how in the relative stillness of the ancient world, the rustling of the ornamentation women wore on their arms, feet, and hips was a significant experience of sound, or how the sound of an animal horn or of a trumpet was perceived as a supernatural rumbling.²

Even though the time and place that interest us here—the last decades of the 54th century “from the Creation” (early 17th century) in Northern Italy—were radically different from those described by Braun, nonetheless striking analogies come to the surface. Certainly the historical situation, the social circumstance, and the listeners' psychological disposition and corresponding reaction to the music I will deal with can be better recovered, and yet not completely. We are in fact separated from the events of the past, not only musically, by an invisible barrier, all the more insurmountable the further we advance away from the past, which is indeed, “a foreign country.”³

1 Salomone Rossi, *Complete Works*, edited by Don Harrán, Part III, *Sacred Vocal Works in Hebrew*, Volume 13a, אֲשֶׁר לְשִׁלְמוֹהַ הַשִּׁירִים (*Hashirim 'asher lishlomo* / “The Songs of Solomon”), *General Introduction* (Middleton, WI: American Institute of Musicology), 2003:184. “Them”, towards the end of this passage, means “the songs.”

2 Joachim Braun, *Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine. Archaeological, Written, and Comparative Sources* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 2002:xii.

3 “The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there,” Leslie Poles Hartley, *The Go-Between* (London: Hamish Hamilton), 1953, *incipit*.

The goal of this article is to reconstruct elements of the four areas just mentioned by exploring some of the consequences that Salomone Rossi's *Ha-shirim asher lishlomoh* produced, both with regard to the soundscape of the ghetto of Mantua and, more broadly, of the town as a whole during the same years in which Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) was active there, and the concept of Jewish space—as opposed to the concept of space external to the town's ghetto—sealed off in 1612.

The choice of Mantua is justified in that this small Northern Italian town has long been deemed exemplary by musicologists for the relationship between its non-Jewish and Jewish components. To quote Israel Adler: “nowhere else has the transfer of Jewish musicianship from the outer world to the service of the synagogue left a more remarkable imprint than in Mantua.”⁴

Why ghettos?

It is unfeasible—even briefly—to retrace the reasons that caused the establishment of Italian ghettos, because “the ghetto—the physical and legal entity—should be seen as a specifically early modern tool, put to use by different states to meet a range of specific political, religious, economic and administrative purposes.”⁵ In other words, every single state that existed at that time on the soil of the Italian peninsula, together with its preceding history, lends itself to an interpretation on its own, with some points similar to and others quite different from those in other states. Concerning Mantua in particular, I deem it necessary to recall the huge tension internal to the Christian world which grew stronger during the 16th century. From a religious as well as geo-political point of view, the excruciating splitting with the territories “conquered” by the Protestant denominations early in the 17th century led to a new *status quo* that challenged the previous centrality of Rome with unprecedented force. Protestant ideas had spread as far into Italy as the Mantuan duchy, and adherence to its doctrines were becoming worryingly numerous in many villages.

This development was one of the causes at the base of the so-called Counter-Reformation. The latter resulted from belated and manifestly embarrassed reaction of the Roman Church to the accusations and positions of Martin Luther and, to a lesser degree, from pressures for reform that had long been

4 Israel Adler, “The Rise of Art Music in the Italian Ghetto: The Influence of Segregation on Jewish Musical Praxis,” in Alexander Altmann, ed., *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP), 1967:321-364:340.

5 Stefanie B. Siegmund, *The Medici State and the Ghetto of Florence* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press), 2006:407-408.

building within the Roman Church. In this framework, and as far as the Italian Jewish communities are concerned, the Roman Church's harshest overt act was its decision, in the mid 1550s, to create Jewish ghettos within the Papal States. The professed aim was to tolerate the presence of Jews in major urban centers, provided they be enclosed in well-defined, spatially separated, regulated and controlled spaces, with conversion as the ultimate goal.⁶

"But there was a process in the Italian states of redefining Christian belief and behavior, and it was found not only in the elimination of heresy and clarification of doctrine but also in the establishing of harder, more visible boundaries between the two licit faiths—Catholic and Jewish."⁷ Even though the Papal bull which instituted the ghettos, *Cum nimis absurdum*, had been issued as early as 1555, negotiations between Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga (1587-1612) and the local Jewish community regarding implementation of the decree began only in 1602 and ended in 1612. Thus, "the Mantuan community was the last of the large Italian communities to be confined to a ghetto."⁸ Official signs of hardening towards the Jews in Mantua had already been detectable, however, at least since the 1570s; the first discriminatory proclamation, by Duke Guglielmo, was issued on March 1, 1576, pertaining especially to forbidden relationships between Jews and Christians. That was followed by a proclamation on wearing the Jewish badge—which in Mantua was "ranzo," by the way, which could mean either "orange" or "golden yellow"—issued on August 28, 1577.

The first Italian ghetto had been instituted in Venice, 1516. One of the first Jewish documents to name it is the "Diary" of David Reuveni, the supposed ambassador of a mythic king of the Jews. A Diary passage written in Venice, 1524, mentions the "Ghetto, the place where the Jews dwell."⁹ From a linguistic point of view it is clear that the word "ghetto" comes from the Venetian noun

6 See Renata Segre, "La Controriforma: espulsioni, conversioni, isolamento," and Stephanie Siegmund, "La vita nei ghetti," both in Corrado Vivanti, ed., *Storia d'Italia—Annali 11°*, I. *Dall'alto Medioevo all'età dei ghetti* (Turin: Einaudi), 1996:707-778 and 843-892, respectively; and Anna Foa, "La logica del ghetto (XVI-XVII secolo)," in David Bidussa, Enrica Collotti Pisichel & Raffaella Scardi, eds., *Identità e storia degli ebrei* (Milan: Franco Angeli), 2000: 60-67.

7 Stefanie B. Siegmund, *The Medici State...*, 2006: 3.

8 Shlomo Simonsohn, *History of the Jews in the Duchy of Mantua*, Jerusalem, Kiryath Sepher, 1977: 39.

9 Anna Foa, *La logica del ghetto...*, 2000:65. For Reuveni, see Lea Sestieri, *David Reubeni: Un ebreo d'Arabia in missione segreta nell'Europa del '500* (Genoa: Marietti), 1991; the passage quoted is on p. 105: "Ghetto, il luogo dove abitano gli ebrei."

“getto,” after a foundry in that city, where metal was “gettato” (melted to make cannons). Right from the start, however, Jews tended to derive its social and cultural meaning from *get*, Hebrew for “divorce”:¹⁰ Christian society’s final disengagement from the Jewish element within it.¹¹ The other side of this coin, which would seem to be characterized only by the idea of repudiation, is made clear by Roberto Bonfil, in two ways: (a) the Republic of Venice formulated the idea of the “ghetto” in 1516 and it was realized only forty years later (though, in this case, with more negative intents and even dire consequences) by the Holy See; and (b) at the root of the idea of the ghetto stood the concept of abandonment of the traditional policy of exclusion of the Jews from the single city or state. Accordingly, “the reception of Jews into Christian society was transformed by means of the ghetto from being exceptional and unnatural into being unexceptional and natural.”¹² Ironically, institution of the ghetto transformed a dynamic of social instability into one of greater stability and, in a sense, of some sort of balance.

Despite the negative practical-social-and-psychic consequences caused by this enforced confinement of a portion of the populace to a single enclosed space, Jewish communities found in ghettoization an unexpected stimulus to strengthen their sense of affiliation and to reassert, in many ways, the uniqueness of their own culture. The Jewish community of Florence offers confirmation of this point:

The examination of Jewish life in Tuscany before the ghetto [...] led to the argument [...] that in many ways it was the act of ghettoization that “made” a Jewish community in Florence.¹³

Other historical evidence also confirms that the separated space of the ghetto was not perceived just negatively by those who were crammed within it:

the community of Mantua was one of those which did not object to the foundation of the ghetto. The decree was even received with a certain

10 Even though the term, strictly speaking, meant originally a “legal document”; see Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (London: Luzac; New York: Putnam), 1903:233.

11 See Ariel Toaff, *Ghetto*, in *Enciclopedia delle Scienze Sociali*, Treccani, <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ghetto> (Enciclopedia_delle_Scienze_Sociali).

12 Roberto Bonfil, “Change in the Cultural Patterns of a Jewish Society in Crisis: Italian Jewry at the Close of the Sixteenth Century,” *Jewish History*, III (1988), n. 2, pages 11-33, and *Gli ebrei in Italia nell’epoca del Rinascimento* (Florence: Sansoni), 1991, *passim*.

13 Stefanie B. Siegmund, *The Medici State...*, 2006: 408.

measure of satisfaction because of the protection it offered the Jews by segregating them from the hostile Christian population.¹⁴

It is obvious to state that the ghetto was—spatially—a separate place from its surrounding urban space. Less obvious is the fact that the ghetto was also thought of as a space that would be visually almost impenetrable both for those who looked in from the outside and—more significantly—for those who gazed towards the outside from inside the ghetto. That would explain the obligation, in the ducal proclamations of 1576 and 1601, to block up all the apertures in the houses of the ghetto which looked out on churches and Christian graveyards.¹⁵

Beyond putting social marginality and geographic propinquity in dialectic confrontation, this delimitation of the visual capability of those enclosed within the ghetto implied that the mere gaze of Jews onto Christian holy places posed a sort of threat as some kind of visual pollution of the purity of the place itself. A measure of this sort is only comprehensible in the context of a society which struggled to achieve a self-image that would be monolithically Christian and Catholic, in which even the sheer visual of the Other—the outsider—was feared as a dangerous intrusion into the religious and social order.¹⁶ In addition to their architectural function of letting light and air into the buildings, it is important to keep in mind that windows were also the means via which a vital form of social communication took place. Through the windows, in fact, “people’s gazes crossed, determining a condition of perception that became a cultural, psychological, and moral condition. The window functioned as a space for mediation, diffusion, and exchange.”¹⁷

Soundscapes

We now shift our attention to the musical realm. Following an interpretive line first advanced by Israel Adler,¹⁸ it comes as no surprise that Rossi’s *Songs* of 1622/23 were (presumably) composed in the years subsequent to the institution of the Mantuan ghetto (1612) and that they can therefore be considered as one of the unforeseen consequences of the ghetto’s very institution.

14 Simonsohn, *History...*, 1977:39-40

15 *Ibid.*, 113-116 and 772-773.

16 For this and much more, I refer the reader to an article by Dana E. Katz, “‘Clamber not you up to the casements’: On ghetto views and viewing,” in *Jewish History* (2010) 24, pages 127-153.

17 Renzo Dubbini, *Geography of the Gaze in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago: University of Chicago), 2002:206.

18 See Israel Adler, *The Rise...*, 1967.

From the viewpoint of those on the outside looking in, some aspects of ghetto life—above all those that took place within private homes, since the synagogues were accessible to all, including non-Jews—remained invisible. This was also true for everything that happened there after the gates closed every evening. That is why, during night time hours, the only sensory access to the ghetto from the outside was obtainable by means of smells and sounds. These could not be contained by doors, walls or gates. At night, the ghetto could take on a life made freer through festive activities or communal entertainments: “the night was the right moment to rehearse and stage theatrical works, or to organize choirs and musical concerts.”¹⁹

The ghetto’s soundscape, in particular, had to change dramatically during the daily 24-hour cycle. During daytime it was filled with the typical noises of commercial activities and by the equally noisy (at least to Christian ears) religious services held in various synagogues. By night the ghetto resonated with the sounds of instruments or of singing-or-reciting voices for celebratory or entertaining purposes, etcetera. To this we might add the sonic facets provided by various exotic-sounding languages spoken in the ghetto: Hebrew and Aramaic in the synagogues and study halls; more generally, the Judeo-Italian²⁰ vernacular spoken by the majority, and the Yiddish spoken by a strong Ashkenazi minority.²¹

These multiple markers served to delimit a specifically Jewish space. They also defined the relationship that Jews had, conceptually, with the idea of a non-Jewish part of the town. In preceding centuries, cultivated Jewish men had left traces of a strong sense of belonging to the town in its entirety, reserving even a particular treatment, replete with wit, for the very name of the town of Virgil. Learned scribes had, in fact, played literary games with that name, starting from the

Hebrew expression *man tov*, which means “a good manna,” [...] taking the liberty which neglected the concordance of gender of the adjective *tov* with *man*, which is in Hebrew masculine, indicated the town of the Gonzaga and of Mantegna adding the feminine ending to the adjective and splitting the name in *man tovah*.²²

19 Stephanie Siegmund, *La vita nei ghetti...*, 1996:863.

20 See Maria Mayer Modena, “Le parlate giudeo-italiane,” in Corrado Vivanti, ed., *Storia d’Italia — Annali 11°*, II. *Dell’emancipazione a oggi* (Turin: Einaudi), 1997:937-963.

21 See Roberto Bonfil, *Gli ebrei in Italia...*, 1991:206-207.

22 Mauro Perani, “Premessa del curatore,” in Mauro Perani, ed., *Una manna buona per Mantova—Man Tov le-Man Tovah*, Studies in honor of Vittore Colorni for his 92nd birthday (Florence, Olschki), 2004:XI-XIV.

The name of Mantua came thus to mean, in Hebrew, “[the town of] good manna.”

Such allegiance to one’s hometown barely astounds us, if we consider that between the 15th and the 17th centuries Mantua hosted one of the culturally more active Jewish communities on the entire Italian peninsula. During the Middle Ages and Renaissance, Mantua was in fact, a beacon which spread its light over all Europe. As a result of the migrations which had taken place from the 13th century onward from Rome, Germany and France,²³ the Jewish presence in town grew considerably; an increase in the number of synagogues that were built mirrored this state of things. Suffice it to recall that at the beginning of the 17th century, twelve were functioning. Among these, three practiced the Italian rite: the “Prima Scuola Grande” (“First Great Synagogue”), the “Norsa-Torrazzo” (where “Norsa” is the surname of a local Jewish family, while “torrazzo” means “big tower” —the only one preserved to this day, although in a different location), and the “Cases” (another surname). Three others practiced the Ashkenazi rite: “Della Beccaria” (“Of the slaughterhouse”), “Ostiglia” (the name of a village in the south of the “Mantovano”) and “Porto” (a surname).²⁴ The relative sizes of the three groups present in town (Italiani, Ashkenazi and some Sephardi)²⁵ is reflected in the fact that, in the second half of the 16th century, “out of the three massari [i.e., spokesmen] of the community, there would always be two Italiani and one Ashkenazi.”²⁶

At the end of the 1620s, 24 rabbis were active in town, beyond those living in outlying villages of the Mantovano.²⁷ Unlike other pre-unification Italian states, in the duchy of Mantua the Jews were also allowed to dwell in the countryside, even though a ghetto was established in town.²⁸ Finally,

23 See Vittore Colorni, “Gli ebrei a Sabbioneta”, *Civiltà mantovana*, new series, 1990 (28-29), pages 125-140.

24 See Simonsohn, *History...*, 1977:567-571; and David Cassuto, “Aronot Qodeš di Mantova in Israele”, in Mauro Perani *Una manna...*, 2004:629-655.

25 “The Sephardi minority had no status whatsoever in the community, and they assimilated entirely into one of the two groups”: Simonsohn, *History...*, 1977:500. From the data collected by Shifra Baruchson-Arbib we reach the same conclusion: the Italiani were 73.7%, the Ashkenazi 22.1% and the Sephardi 4.2%; it is to be noted, however, that these data are based on private as well as “public” Jewish book holdings in Mantua in 1595: see Shifra Baruchson-Arbib, *La culture livresque des juifs d’Italie à la fin de la Renaissance* (Paris: CNRS Edition), 2001:243.

26 Simonsohn, *History...*, 1977:500.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 575.

28 See Stephanie Siegmund, *La vita nei ghetti...*, 1996: 846, footnote 3, and

toward the middle of the 16th century Mantua had become one of the most important centers of the diaspora as far as the printing of kabbalistic works is concerned. This has been made clear in recent decades, thanks mainly to the studies of Giulio Busi:

within a few years [from 1557 on] a complete collection of texts previously regarded as highly secret was placed at the disposal of the reading public.... From Mantua the kabbalistic texts reached all the Italian communities as well as the rest of the diaspora in such a way that the pages of the Mantuan *Zohar* soon became familiar to both erudite Jews further afield in Central Europe and learned kabbalists in the Holy Land.²⁹

Positive mentions concerning the Gonzaga, in the Foreword by Leon Modena to the *Songs* (13),³⁰ can be seen in the same value perspective as the relationship between the town-in-the-town (i.e., the ghetto) and the rest of the surrounding urban space of Mantua. These acknowledgements take on a special value, to be measured by a specific unit of measurement. And this of course because they were written in a language, Hebrew, surely not known to the dukes themselves, even though we cannot certainly rule out the possibility of someone, known to the dukes of Mantua, who could have translated the texts for them from Hebrew into Italian.³¹ It is therefore legitimate to ask whether or not these are mannered verbal gestures, comparable to ones in Italian or Latin that were very common at that time, in the same patronage contexts (even though in a broad sense).³²

The Songs vis à vis relationships between Judaism and Christianity

In Mantua at the beginning of the 17th century, two events occurred that bore great meaning for the history of European music and culture. 1) In 1607 Claudio Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, to a libretto by Alessandro Striggio Jr (whose

854.

29 Giulio Busi, *Mantua and the Kabbalah* (Milan: Skira), 2001:54, 56.

30 See Salamone Rossi, *Sacred Vocal Works in Hebrew...*, 2003: 178.

31 On the more general topic of the knowledge of Hebrew during the Renaissance among non-Jews see Giulio Busi, *Lenigma dell'ebraico nel Rinascimento* (Torino: Arago), 2007.

32 For a complete edition of *Ha-shirim* that includes positive mention of the Gonzagas in Leon Modena's Foreword, see the one by Don Harrán, *Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae*, American Institute of Musicology, page 178.

second *finale* is readable in Counter-Reformistic terms),³³ was staged for the first time. 2) In the Hebrew calendar year 5383 (straddling 1622 and 1623 CE), the Jewish musician Salomone Rossi (*Shlomoh mei-ha-adumim*; b. circa 1570—d. after 1630), a Mantuan musician in occasional professional employ by the Gonzaga dukes who ruled the Mantuan territory, handed to a Venetian publishing house his volume of vocal polyphonic settings of Hebrew texts, mostly psalms, entitled *The Songs of Solomon (Ha-shirim asher lishlomoh)*.³⁴

If Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* represents one of the first expressions of modernity in music, Rossi's *Ha-shirim* bring to fruition all of the extraordinary activity that had been ripening during the preceding decades on the highest level—both commissioned and fostered by the Gonzaga, on the one hand, and within the Mantuan Jewish community, on the other—starting at least from the mid-16th century. The value of *The Songs* can be hardly overestimated, since they are, in the history of European music, the first known instance of published polyphonic compositions on Hebrew texts. These 33 settings allow us to shed light on certain traits of the Jewish culture of that time, traits which found in Mantua a particularly exuberant expression. They also underscore relationships on the one hand between this culture and that (whether sacred or profane) of the surrounding non-Jewish world, and on the other between individuals (Jews as well as Christians) who took part in such a challenging

33 See Stefano Patuzzi, “Giudaismo e cristianesimo nello specchio della musica. *L'Orfeo* di Claudio Monteverdi (1607) e le *Armature dei valorosi* di Avraham Portaleone (5367),” *Postumia*, 22/3 (2011), pages 105-122.

34 See Claudio Gallico, *Monteverdi. Poesia musicale, teatro e musica sacra* (Turin: Einaudi), 1979 and Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi* (Turin: EDT), 1985; within the studies in English stands out Tim Carter, *Monteverdi's Musical Theatre* (New Haven and London: Yale UP), 2002. The reference on Salomone Rossi is Don Harrán, *Salomone Rossi: Jewish Musician in Late Renaissance Mantua* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP), 1999. For some “lateral” considerations I refer the reader to my review of this book, that appeared in the *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia*, XXXIV (1999), pages 415-418. For an overall view on Jewish music in Italy I refer the reader to Massimo Acanfora Torrefranca, “Sulle musiche degli ebrei in Italia,” in Corrado Vivanti, ed., *Storia d'Italia—Annali 11°...*, 1996:475-493; Leo Levi, *Canti tradizionali e tradizioni liturgiche. Ricerche e studi sulle tradizioni musicali ebraiche e sui loro rapporti con il canto cristiano. 1954-1971*, edited by Roberto Leydi (Lucca: LIM), 2002; and Francesco Spagnolo, “Musiche in contatto—Le tradizioni ebraiche in Italia nelle registrazioni di Leo Levi—Questioni metodologiche e prospettive di ricerca,” *EM (Rivista degli archivi di etnomusicologia dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia)*, 2/2 (2006), pages 83-107.

endeavor.³⁵ Through the lens of *The Songs* we can see much more clearly several essential facets of the relationships between these two cultures. They were sometimes tense and characterized by tragic consequences, sometimes fruit-bearing and dynamic. Over the centuries Judaism and Christianity were spatially close in the Mantovano, yet they each found the most different forms of expression.³⁶ It is from this historico-cultural perspective that I will deal with Salomone Rossi's *Songs* in the following pages.

Even though information on Rossi's life is scant, we are nonetheless able to say that Salomone was presumably born around 1570 and had more-or-less continuous work relations with the Gonzaga court from the end of the 1580s to the late 1620s. His duties included his activity both as violist³⁷ and as composer. He published eight books of secular vocal music (to texts, among others, of the greatest Italian poets of that time: Battista Guarini, Gabriello Chiabrera, Ottavio Rinuccini, Giovan Battista Marino) and four books of instrumental music. Towering over all of them are *The Songs of Solomon*, thanks to their significance for the culture of Mantua generally and for that of its Jewish culture specifically. Within the former, in fact, the conditions which allowed for the creation of such a unique work came to be.

The Songs contain 33 settings, and there are good reasons to believe that Rossi composed additional pieces that remained unpublished.³⁸ Among the published ones, the setting of *Psalm 8* ("O Lord, how majestic is Thy name in all the earth") and *Psalm 121* ("I lift my eyes to the mountains") stand out. So do the particularly intense one of *Psalm 137* ("By the rivers of Babylon"), passages from *Isaiah 35* ("The wilderness and the parched land shall be glad") and the *Kaddish shaleim* ("Reader's Sanctification").

35 On these aspects see Francesco Spagnolo, "Scritto in italiano, ascoltato in ebraico: a proposito delle fonti scritte della musica ebraica in Italia," in Stefano Patuzzi, ed., *Ebraismo in musica* (Mantua: Di Pellegrini), 2011:87-101.

36 See Roberto Bonfil, "Lo spazio culturale degli ebrei d'Italia fra Rinascimento ed Età barocca," in Corrado Vivanti, ed., *Storia d'Italia — Annali 11°...*, 1996:411-473.

37 See David Nutter, "Salomone Rossi's Chitarrone Madrigals," in Rodolfo Baroncini, Paola Besutti & Teresa M. Gialdroni, eds., *Claudio Monteverdi. Studi e prospettive, Proceedings of the Monteverdi conference*, Mantua, 21-24 October 1993 (Florence: Olschki), 1998:215-261.

38 See Don Harrán, "'Dum recordaremur Sion': Music in the Light and Thought of the Venetian Rabbi Leon Modena (1571-1648)," *AJS Review*, 23/1 (1998), pages 16-71: 49-50.

Here is the volume's title-page, in the translation of Don Harrán (with minor variations):³⁹

THE SONGS

of Solomon

Psalms, songs and hymns

composed according to the science of song

and of [art] music

for three, four, five, six, seven and eight voices

by his honored eminence, Master *Shlomoh mei-ha'adumim* (may his Rock
preserve him and grant him life!)

a resident of the holy community of Mantua

for thanking God and singing to His exalted name on all sacred occasions.

A new thing in the land.

Here in Venice, [5]383,

as a pious act of the lords

Pietro e Lorenzo Bragadini

in the house of Giovanni Calleoni,

for the [publishing firm of the] illustrious lords

Pietro and Lorenzo Brag[adini].

The meaningful epigraph to the “new thing in the land” underlines right from the title-page the absolutely unique understanding represented by *The Songs of Solomon*, which were granted a *privilegio* (very similar to a modern author's copyright) of four influential Venetian rabbis—by means of a document issued in 1622 CE—concerning the included compositions:

We have been requested to confirm that which was justly and properly asked of us by his honored eminence, Master *Shlomoh mei-ha-adumim* (may his Rock preserve him and give him life!), a Mantuan, who, in becoming the first man to print Hebrew music, went to great trouble and

39 As it stands in the Basso part-book, reproduced in D. Harrán, *Salamone...*, 1999, as illustration number 10; the last two lines appear, in the original title-page, not in Hebrew but in Italian.

incurred accessory expenses, and it would not be right were anyone to show up and harm him by reprinting such things or making a purchase of them from another party. Therefore, after seeing the license issued in this regard by the eminent ministers of the *Cattaver*⁴⁰ (may their glory be exalted!), we, the undersigned, ordain, by the decree of the angels and the words of the sanctified and upon [the threat of] the biting snake, that, for the period of fifteen years from today, no son of Israel, wherever he may be, print, in any way, any of the pieces, neither in whole nor in part, that are in the collection of this music without the permission of the aforementioned composer or his heirs.⁴¹

This *privilegio* is of the utmost interest, since it was granted to Rossi not by the civic authorities, as was the custom, but rather by a group of rabbinic authorities. We also read in it, tellingly, that the composer had become “the first man to print **Hebrew music**”—*adam ha-rishon lehadvip musikah ivrit*: as Don Harrán points out, with regard to the expression “Hebrew music”, it is “the first mention of its kind in the literature.”⁴²

Since *The Songs* were printed, they were evidently intended for commercial distribution at large. This aspect is particularly significant with regard to Jewish communities spread over a wide geographical area. Presumably, considering the lively book circulation of that period, *Ha-shirim* resonated in other Jewish locales as well, surely in Italy, and perhaps even abroad. From the perspective of this new repertoire’s potential impact upon multiple diaspora communities, the emphasis placed by the *privilegio* on Rossi as the “first man to print Hebrew music,” assumes even greater importance.

From everything we know about the Jewish musical tradition until Salomone Rossi, *The Songs* can be said to introduce two new elements: the composer is both living and known; and the settings are polyphonic—to texts in Hebrew (or a mixture of Aramaic and Hebrew in the *Kaddish*). Rossi apparently drew his inspiration for them from the modes typically associated with Christian polyphonic vocal music, adjusting them (also, if not exclusively) for synagogue-usage. He ‘judaized’ them by posing himself at the top of an historical process that had its start in the Biblical period. A comprehensive glance on this centuries-long period of purported Jewish musical continuity is offered at the beginning of the Foreword to *The Songs*, written by Rabbi

40 Tax assessors of Venice, also responsible for the administration of the local ghetto.

41 See Salamone Rossi, *Sacred Vocal Works in Hebrew...*, 2003:220-221 (translation by Don Harrán, here with minor variations by the author of this article).

42 *Ibid.*, 220.

Leon Modena (1571-1648). One passage in particular, notable for its radical reinterpretation of history, deserves a recapitulation.

In ancient Israel, Modena writes, all the sciences flourished, including music, as is very clear from the figure of King David (reigned 1010-970 BCE)⁴³; this state of things lasted until the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. During the centuries of national dispersion that followed, the Jewish people's familiarity with the sciences trailed off. "Still, their ears picked up a trace of it [i.e., wisdom, but read the "science [of music]"] afterwards from their neighbors [i.e., gentiles] as a remembrance of the city [Jerusalem] in these generations at the end of time."⁴⁴ From Modena's reading of history it is clear that, if Israel's musical greatness originated in the times of King David, Salomone Rossi was the one who, by drawing on the musical traditions of the Christians, made this expressive modality come alive again after centuries of silence.

The Songs as mover of rabbinic mountains

Another interpretation, as well as a justification of the compositional and cultural project undertaken by Salomone can be derived from within the Jewish world. To fully understand the historical import of *The Songs of Solomon* it is necessary to recall that tolerance of music per se in the synagogue, and even less so of polyphonic music, wasn't granted at all by the rabbis of that time. It was precisely against this hostile background that Leon Modena wrote—or about 1605⁴⁵—a *responsum* to a question posed to him on the admissibility of music in the synagogue. In this text Modena makes three points: 1) he specifies, through quotations and comments from the Torah and Talmud, that the *sh'liah tsibbur* [precentor] "is required to make his voice as pleasant as possible in prayer"; 2) he asks, "and if he were able to make his one voice sound like ten singers together, would it not be good?"; he extends the implied

43 See Bustanay Oded, s.v "David," in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter), 1972, 5:1318.

44 Salamone Rossi, *Sacred Vocal Works in Hebrew...*, 2003: 177. For a contextualization of this last expression I refer readers to the recent article by Don Hár-ran, "An Early Modern Hebrew Poem on Music in Its Beginnings and at the End of Time," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 64/1 (Spring 2011), pages 3-50.

45 See paragraph 34 of Modena's Foreword to *The Songs*, in which he recalls "what I wrote in an answer to a question eighteen years ago—I was then a teacher of Torah in the holy community of "Ferrara..."; S. Rossi, *Sacred Vocal Works in Hebrew...*, 2003:184.

answer to that question by asking further, “or if, at his side, he had assistants whom the Lord favored with a sweet voice and they sang along with him not in [compositional] order but rather [by improvising here and there] *a[d] aria* [אה אר׳איה—“upon the melody”], as is customary all day long in Ashkenazi congregations, and should it happen that they relate to and coordinate with him, would it be considered a sin on their part?”⁴⁶

The phrasing of Modena’s question suggests that some form of polyvocal singing, albeit not very elaborate, was practiced in local Ashkenazi synagogues, and actually, as noted previously, an Ashkenazi congregation did flourish in the Mantua of Salomone Rossi’s time. From this type of improvised musical performance—to a composition polyphonically structured right from its conception—the step was small, and Salomone Rossi took it.

With regard to the vocal resources available in the late 16th and early 17th century within the Jewish community of Mantua, some data can be inferred from a proclamation of March 1, 1576—reinforced by a second one in 1601—which stated that Jews were forbidden to sing, play instruments or dance in Christian houses (particularly in the houses of women), nor teach Christians to sing, play, or dance, unless the Duke’s explicit permission were obtained.⁴⁷ If—after a quarter-century and in official documents relating to the social relations between Jews and Christians—such a prohibition is repeated, instrumental as well as singing skills among Jews was apparently not so rare. Moreover, the presence in *Ha-shirim* of settings for eight voices leads us to infer the availability in Mantua—in the years preceding the printing—of at least eight Jewish singers able to read music and (it goes without saying) the Hebrew lyrics. In fact, Modena himself (in paragraph 29 of his Foreword) tells us that “in singing, the majority of those versed in the system [of notation] are also skilled in reading [Hebrew].”⁴⁸

46 *Ibid.*, 206-207. Modena’s linguistic peculiarity (i.e., his “citing the Italian term in Hebrew characters”) had already been noted by Israel Adler: *The Rise...*, 1967:339, footnote 77.

47 See Simonsohn, *History...*, 1977:114; the original Italian text is on page 773: “Che li hebrei non prattichino in casa di Christiani massimamente di donne di cantare sonare o ballare, overo per insegnare a cantare sonare o ballare, se non havranno licenza in scritto da noi [...]”.

48 S. Rossi, *Sacred Vocal Works in Hebrew...*, 2003:183. Salamone could well have been one of the eight, since we know from at least one source (Leon Modena’s third dedicatory poem to *Ha-shirim*) that he could also perform vocally as well: “Accustomed / amidst singers / before princes / to sing [*la-shir*] / to his own dukes / and nobles”; *ibid.*, p. 189.

Looking beyond musical and performative considerations, one can catch a glimpse in *The Songs*, thanks to the texts by Rossi and Modena that accompany them, of very high stakes: cultural dignity, on the one hand; and social respectability on the other. From the words of Leon Modena in his *responsum* (56), his Foreword (15) and his third dedicatory poem (13 and 14), a prevalent attitude of smugness or maybe even of scorn by non-Jews towards Jews unable to write music, emerges. In refuting this contention, *The Songs of Solomon* constituted tangible proof of how a Jew could write (Hebrew) music of value in the same way as his Christian colleagues, and on a high level.

Not that *The Songs* were completely unprecedented; let us mention at least one earlier example: *Il primo libro dei madrigali a sei voci* by David Sacerdote (Cohen), printed in Venice in 1575, of which only the part-book of the Quinto is extant.⁴⁹ In addition of being the first example of “art” music to be published by a Jew,⁵⁰ this book attests that the general social atmosphere of the Gonzagas’ territories was already predisposed, since the closing decades of the 16th century, to accept—or ever foster—a music book published by a Jew. This state of things is witnessed, for example, by the dedications that appear in Sacerdote’s book, which refer continuously precisely to institutions and key figures of the Mantuan society.⁵¹

Getting back to the often silent, never interrupted, sometimes even unconscious dialogue between Jewish-and-Christian cultures, an issue of intellectual honesty comes to the surface.⁵² Modena and Rossi didn’t seek, in fact, to “invent

49 A brief technical explanation. In the case of a set of vocal compositions for five voices (Basso, Tenore, Quinto, Alto, Canto), the vocal lines of each voice for all the compositions were printed in a small ‘part-book’. In the case of Sacerdote’s *Il primo libro*, only the Quinto voice’s part-book survived.

50 See D. Harrán, *Salamone...*, 1999:1.

51 See Iain Fenlon, *Music and Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Mantua* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP), 1980:43; plus the entry on the composer which appears in the *Appendice* to Alberto Basso, ed., *Dizionario enciclopedico universale della musica e dei musicisti* (Turin: UTET), 1990:640.

52 Interpretations of the relationship—obviously far from being equal on both sides—vary considerably according to the perspective adopted by each historian. For two different visions I refer the reader to the studies by Roberto Bonfil (specifically to the aforementioned *Gli ebrei in Italia nell’epoca del Rinascimento* and *Lo spazio culturale degli ebrei d’Italia fra Rinascimento ed Età barocca*) and Alberto Castaldini, *L’ipotesi mimetica. Contributo a una antropologia dell’ebraismo* (Firenze: Olschki), 2001. One wonders, with reference to this last work, whether *The Songs of Solomon* could constitute a significant element if inserted in the methodological framework—outlined in the writings of René Girard and then drawn

a tradition.” That would have been asserting, apparently for purposes with far-reaching consequences beyond the musical realm, an idea of continuity with a more or less remote past.⁵³ Instead, they declare with absolute sincerity the various steps they took: a process that can be described as a judaization of the ways of writing polyphonic music typical of the non-Jewish musical tradition of the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The most cogent element at the heart of this venture was perhaps the *appeal* of the madrigals’ and motets’ polyphonic structure, which happened to be à la mode for Mantua as well as for all of Europe during that period. That particular compositional style contributed a fundamental part of the soundscapes common to every urban center of the period, and an identity to every institution, either civic or religious.

The Songs as a soundscape changer

At the same time, performance of Rossi’s *Ha-shirim* marked off, even symbolically, a specifically Jewish space—the ghetto (and within it, the synagogue)—in a way that could boast very few precedents, perhaps the only one having been in Ferrara, as mentioned.⁵⁴

About the polyphonic structure of the Ferrarese synagogue’s singing we cannot say much, since no musical evidence has survived. What is certain is that, from the very moments of the first performances of Rossi’s compositions which later appeared in the published volume, the soundscape of both the ghetto and of Mantua changed noticeably, marking in history a point of

upon by Castaldini—of “mimetic desire.”

53 The methodological reference is, of course, Eric J. Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP), 1983:1 (Introduction: “Inventing Traditions,” by Hobsbawm): “‘Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.”

54 “We may now stress the significance of the date (about 1605) on which this introduction of art music in the Ferrarese synagogue took place; it was only a few years after the annexation of Ferrara to the Papal States (1597), which caused an immediate deterioration in the situation of its Jewish residents. Furthermore, we may point out that this musical occurrence at Ferrara was not only without relation to Solomon Rossi but that it no doubt preceded the introduction of art music in the Mantuan synagogue” (Israel Adler, *The Rise...*, 1967:340).

no-return. I intend the concept of ‘soundscape’ to encompass all activities which contribute to the sonic face of an urban center that by definition will also refer back to the religious, social and politico-economic realms of the town in its entirety, with special reference to the institutions that mold its characteristics and delineate its spaces. In those centuries of *ancien régime*, through musical works commissioned by a patron (be it a religious institution or a ruler), extra-musical values were incidentally transmitted to listeners. These included values deemed fundamental by the patrons and pertaining, most often, to the very same image that the patron wanted to give of himself, so as to “boast to the *world* his own social rank.”⁵⁵

In light of all the foregoing we can understand the huge significance of what happened in Mantua during those years in the early 17th century thanks to the efforts of Salomone Rossi, the very same years that followed upon the institution of the ghetto.⁵⁶

The Songs as a positive reaction to the institution of the ghetto

Continuing along this interpretive line (following the methodology of Kenneth Stow), we find it apropos to ask whether and how *The Songs of Solomon* can be seen as a sonic projection of the holy tongue, which contributes an enriching element to the Mantuan soundscape—while simultaneously differentiating the Jewish entity from its surrounding Christian society. Put somewhat differently (and following Israel Adler), can Rossi’s *Songs* be considered a positive reaction to the Mantuan Jews’ externally imposed disengagement from their Christian neighbors through ghettoization?⁵⁷ In the final analysis, we are asking whether *Ha-shirim asher lishlomoh* can be understood as a centripetally-inspired reaction to the Mantuan ghetto’s institution. Knowing the answer to that question might enable us to better comprehend why Rossi transferred

55 Claudio Annibaldi, ed., *La musica e il mondo. Mecenasismo e committenza musicale in Italia tra Quattro e Settecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino), 1993:9 (*Introduzione*).

56 On the Mantuan ghetto during the period which is of interest here, see Simonsohn, *History...*, 1977:39-44 and *passim*; Luigi Carnevali, *Il ghetto di Mantova* (Mantova: Sartori), 1973; Maria Grazia Sandri, “Il ghetto di Mantova. Per la storia di un’architettura distrutta,” in *Il Seicento nell’arte e nella cultura. Con riferimenti a Mantova* (Mantua: Accademia Nazionale Virgiliana), 1985:265-269. Emanuele Colorni & Mauro Patuzzi, *C’era una volta il ghetto* (Mantua: Di Pellegrini), 2011, deals mainly with the 20th-century demolition of the buildings situated within the ghetto.

57 See Israel Adler, *The Rise of Art Music...*, 1967.

polyphonic compositional structures typical of the Christian world into the recently enclosed Jewish urban space.⁵⁸

An implicit confirmation of the hypothesis that the institution of the Mantuan ghetto and the composition of Rossi's *Songs* stand in a mutual relationship of cause-and-effect, might also be construed from a linguistic consideration. In his edition of *The Songs* for the *Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae*, Don Harrán urges readers to notice that numerous terms used in the Hebrew texts which accompany *The Songs* are ambiguous.⁵⁹

The logical follow-up question then arises: why did neither Leon Modena nor Salomone Rossi, in their respective writings about *The Songs*, consider transliterating in Hebrew characters the compositional Italian terms which were surely well-known to them, so as to render the reasoning clearer; terms which in Italian possessed a good degree of precision and were subject neither to misunderstanding nor interpretive dubiousness? Such a *modus operandi* (in this case, concerning the names of musical instruments) was followed, for instance, by Avraham ben David Portaleone in the musical chapters of *Shiltei ha-gibborim* ("Armors of the Valiant Ones"), a Hebrew treatise on the various activities that took place in the Jerusalem Temple. In this work, most likely known both to Modena and Rossi—in that it was ended in Mantua in Elul 5367 (1607 CE) and published in the same town in 5372 (1611/12 CE),⁶⁰—one can read for instance of the "viola da gamba" transliterated in

58 Many of these ideas are in Kenneth R. Stow, "Sanctity and the construction of space: the Roman ghetto as sacred space," in Menachem Mor, ed., *Jewish Assimilation, Acculturation and Accommodation: Past Traditions, Current Issues and Future Prospects*, Proceedings of the Second Annual Symposium of the Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick Chair in Jewish Civilization, 24-25 September 1989, Creighton University (Lanham, New York & London: University Press of America), 1991:54-76.

59 Salamone Rossi, *Sacred Vocal Works in Hebrew...*, 2003:16-17:"IV. TRANSLATION OF HEBREW TEXTS INTO ENGLISH—1. *Uncertain musical terms*. As was already noted, the Hebrew terminology for music is diverse, yet often ambiguous. Examples in the texts found in the "Songs" (and their original prefatory matter) are the multiple terms for music itself: *shir*, *shiroṭ*, *nigun* (or *niggun*), *negina*, *neginot*, *musika*, *zemer*, *zimra*, *zemira*, *zemirot*, *renanot* [...]: their exact meaning is arguable. Still other terms for, seemingly, composition or counterpoint, e.g., *seḏer*, *yaḥas*, *erekh* ..., which, formally, mean "order", "relation" and "value/rank", are no less problematical."

60 See Israel Adler, ed., "Hebrew Writings concerning Music," *In Manuscripts and Printed Books from Geonic Times up to 1800*, RISM B IX² (München: Henle Verlag), 1975: 243-283; Daniel Sandler, *Pirké hamusikah besefer: "Shilté haghīb-*

Hebrew characters: **וַיִּאֱלֹהֶּ דָא גַאמְבָּה**.⁶¹ Moreover, *the modus* had already been used by Leon Modena in his forementioned *responsum* (point 49—dating from around 1605 in Ferrara, whose ghetto was instituted in 1624-27).⁶² There he writes in Hebrew characters, as noted above, the Italian expression *a[d] aria* (“upon the melody”). In this regard it is informative to recall—as an extreme case, with entirely different purposes, it goes without saying, and for a different public—that the sermons of rabbi Mordekhai Dato (1525-ca. 1600; whose *Eftah shir bisfatai* is set musically in Rossi’s *Ha-shirim*),⁶³ are written in Hebrew characters even though their basic narrative was originally uttered in Italian.⁶⁴

Why, then, did neither Modena nor Rossi use this device in *The Songs of Solomon*? It seems plausible to conjecture that in their writings appended to *The Songs* they wanted to avoid, as much as possible, using terms and expressions formulated in a tongue other than Hebrew, i.e., coming from a non-Jewish cultural tradition. It is as if they wanted to stress with absolute clarity the unquestioned Jewishness both of the composition and of the verbal as well as musical consumption.⁶⁵ Perhaps—thanks to the latter—they were also alluding, even indirectly, to the delimitation of certain spaces—the synagogue above all—within which ritual events that were highly representative of the life of the Jewish community took place behind the ghetto’s impenetrable walls.

borim” (“Musical chapters in the book Armors of the Valiant Ones,” in Hebrew and English), PhD thesis, Tel Aviv University, 1980; Gianfranco Miletto, “Il significato dello *Šilte ha-gibborim* di Avraham Ben Dawid da Portaleone,” *Materia giudaica*, I (1996), pages 12-13; Avraham ben David Portaleone, *Die Heldenschilde*, German translation and commentary by Gianfranco Miletto, 2 tomes (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang), 2002: 180-181; Gianfranco Miletto, *Glauben und Wissen im Zeitalter der Reformation. Der salomonische Tempel bei Abraham ben David Portaleone (1542-1612)* (Berlin: de Gruyter), 2004; Don Hárnan, “In Search of the ‘Song of Zion’: Abraham Portaleone on Music in the Ancient Temple,” *European Journal of Jewish Studies*, 4/2 (2010), pages 215-239.

61 See Sandler, *Pirké...*, 1980:117.

62 See Ines Miriam Marach & Annie Sacerdoti (ed.), *I luoghi ebraici in Emilia Romagna* (Milan: Touring), 2004:46-53.

63 See S. Rossi, *Sacred Vocal Works in Hebrew...*, 2003:101-107.

64 See Roberto Bonfil, *Lo spazio culturale...*, 1996:429. On the biography and the Judeo-Italian works of Dato, see Giulio Busi, *La Istoria de Purim io ve racconto... Il libro di Ester secondo un rabbino emiliano del Cinquecento* (Rimini: Luisè), 1987.

65 *Ha-shirim* are, in fact, compositions written for Jews who sang and listened (Foreword 21 and 29) in the interior of Jewish spaces (31 and 35).

Music history's debt to Rossi and Modena

Rossi's musical innovations were conceived and executed in the context of his community's recent ghettoization. He is rightly viewed—even from a European-centered perspective—as the first “great” Jewish composer and one of the most significant ever.⁶⁶ However, for the sake of historical accuracy we should also note that the figure of Leon Modena needs to be enhanced considerably. He was a rabbi of ample musical skills who, without doubt, influenced many of the choices that Rossi made, textual ones in particular. One might say that if Rossi was the masterly hand that wrote *The Songs*, Modena was the mind that conceived the entire project, a work that he lists in his *Autobiography* among many others to which he contributed.⁶⁷

Compositionally speaking, if *The Songs of Solomon* didn't represent an absolute novelty (granted that at least one performance of polyphonic singing, as has been noted above, took place in the synagogue of Ferrara around 1605),⁶⁸ they were assuredly an outright innovation for the musical publishing world; and it is quite telling, from a more general perspective, that polyphonic singing—in Jewish circles and specifically in the synagogue—is well attested to in Italy during the decades following the publication of *The Songs*.⁶⁹

This story ended abruptly, along with almost all other expressions of urban cultural life in Mantua, with the town's sacking in 1630. It happened during the final phases of the War of the Mantuan Succession, part of the Thirty Years' War. In July of that year Mantua was plundered by troops of the *Landsknechte* (mercenaries) in the pay of the Holy Roman Empire, after the plague had brought rampant death to the town in preceding months. Under such circumstances the uniqueness of Rossi's *Ha-shirim...* publication becomes readily apparent, even more so in view of the huge economic crisis that gripped the Italian economy from the 1620s on. All of these setbacks, in

66 For some methodological aspects see Edwin Seroussi, “In the Footsteps of the ‘Great Jewish Composer,’” *Min-Ad: Israel Studies in Musicology Online*, 4/2004 (www.biu.ac.il/hu/mu/min-ad04/Rossirev.pdf).

67 I refer the reader to D. Harrán, “*Dum recordaremur Sion*”..., 1998 and to Leone Modena (Mark R. Cohen, ed.), *The Autobiography of a Seventeenth-Century Venetian Rabbi: Leon Modena's Life of Judah* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP), 1988:126.

68 See D. Harrán, *Salamone...*, 1999:203 and following.

69 See for instance Cecil Roth, “L'Accademia musicale nel ghetto veneziano,” *La Rassegna mensile di Israel*, volume III, n.4 (Tebheth 5688): pages 152-162; and Israel Adler, *The Rise of Art Music...*, 1967: 360-364.

fact, adversely affected the printing industry, and in the long run, the transmission and preservation of music.⁷⁰

Of Salomone Rossi as well—“the first man to print Hebrew music”—we lose track during those years, terrible ones in which the plague “spread abroad and the hand of the Lord was heavy upon the people of Israel throughout Italy, in war, famine and plague. And the congregation of Mantua endured troubles the like of which there had not been since the destruction of our Temple until the present.”⁷¹

Mantuan-born Stefano Patuzzi earned a diploma in Organ and Organ Composition at the Conservatory of Mantua, and a Masters degree in Italian Literature at the University of Parma. He subsequently studied Musicology at the Royal Holloway College, University of London, and earned a PhD in Musicology at the University of Bologna. He has taught at the University of Parma and at the Conservatory of Mantua, and published in Italy and England mainly on music, religion and cultural history between the 16th and 17th century. More recently he has been active in the field of the Jewish studies as well.

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This article is respectfully dedicated to the memory of Fabio Norsa (z”l, 1946-2012), a sincere friend and late President of the Jewish Community of Mantua.

70 See, on this, Lorenzo Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP), 1987:73-81.

71 Leone Modena, *The Autobiography...*, 1988:49; the quoted passage refers to the Hebrew year 5390 (1629/1630 CE).

Sanctifying Two-Dimensional Space: The Avodah of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction

By David Greenstein

Introduction

The question of the place of the arts, and, in particular, the visual arts, in Jewish tradition has always been colored by a sense of unease born out of a defensive posture assumed vis-à-vis the host culture—most especially meaning Christian—and now, secular culture. While evidence of all artistic forms: dance, music, poetry, visual arts, and perhaps even the rudiments of drama, can be adduced for ancient Jewish life in the ceremonies and texts of Israel, these early manifestations have mostly failed to continue to develop and flourish as Jewish religious expressions. The avid engagement of the Jews in Western art since the Emancipation has only served to highlight how marginal, or, at most, secondary is the place the arts have occupied in the Tradition.

Efforts have been made to find an explanation for this phenomenon. There is a compelling argument to be made that the socio-political realities of Jewish life over the last two millennia have rendered it almost impossible for the development of a major tradition of Jewish arts. Jewish life in the Diaspora has lacked the security and stability to allow for the development of agents of patronage parallel to the nobility, church and, later, middle class that were necessary for the development of Western Art. Such an argument holds forth the promise that as the position of the Jew has become more normalized in modern times, or, with the democratization of the means of production of wealth and power, the renewal of Jewish artistic expression is now possible. (Indeed, just such a hope animated the extraordinary burst of Jewish artistic creativity in the first years after the Russian Revolution.¹) However, this ignores the very real problem of the fragmented nature of the modern Jewish identity—individual as well as communal—which has made any kind of Jewish expression, whether traditional, ethnic, experimental, religious or secular, more problematic than ever.²

1 See the excellent catalogue produced by the Israel Museum, *TRADITION AND REVOLUTION: The Jewish Renaissance in Russian Avant-Garde Art 1912-1928*, Jerusalem, 1987.

2 Thus, The Jewish Museum, when it re-opened its newly renovated building, consciously chose to mount an exhibition, *From the Inside Out: Eight Contemporary Artists* (June 13-November 14, 1993) featuring artists with problematic relationships to their Jewish heritage.

Be that as it may, this socio-political argument has long been neglected in favor of finding an “essentialist” explanation, an explanation based on the inner identity of Judaism itself. Ironically, this approach has been adopted by some of the most virulent anti-Semites as well as by some of the most devoted exponents of Judaism.

The “positive” Jewish essentialist approach claims that discussions about the relationship between Jewish tradition and the making, display and experience of art must invariably begin with reference to the Second Commandment, the prohibition against idolatrous images. Thus, from the outset, the category of “Idolatry” assumes a dominant position in the discussion. It is posited that this major taboo could only hinder free-flowing artistic production among faithful Jews. This explanation is attractive as it offers an adequately serious reason for this (for us) very serious question. It is also attractive because it offers what seems like a way out of our problem. If we can be convinced that idolatry is no longer a real threat, then Jewish artistic expression may be encouraged. Traditional opposition to the arts is thus posited as indeed powerful but, also, as an anachronism.

There are numerous inadequacies to this approach. First, it ignores the complex and varied interpretations of the Second Commandment and its related laws. Second, it ignores the vast amount of evidence that Jews have always produced art, some of it quite baldly in contravention of the simplistic readings of the Second Commandment. In addition, as mentioned before, it ignores the socio-political realities of Jewish life. This is important not only as an additional factor, but also because, to adopt an argument advanced by Rabbi Leo Baeck,³ the fact of Judaism’s existence as a “minority religion” is not merely a socio-political datum, unfortunate or fortunate. Beyond that, this status has a spiritual significance in that it puts Judaism into the place of the prophet, the counter-cultural force.

Another, powerful critique of the optimism of the positive Jewish essentialist view may be derived, paradoxically, from the other essentialist extreme. Anti-Semitic racist theories proclaim an inherent artistic lack in the Jewish soul, psyche, or blood. The Jew is viewed as a parasite on the creative body of the world. The accusation of the anti-Semite posits a life-giving value to culture and assigns to the Jew the draining, vampire curse that can only lead to death. This vicious, murderous opinion has itself contributed to the undermining and effacing of the Jew as artist, and to the destruction of millions of Jewish lives. But in its perverted way this accusation brings up for us the

3 See his *The Essence of Judaism*, Schocken, 1948, pp. 272-275.

issue of how and in what spirit we might ask ourselves about the place of the arts in Jewish life.

As moderns (or even as post-moderns), do we not also equate life with culture? We also consider the vital expression of a community to be identical with its culture.⁴ And we would mostly agree that such a conviction is a necessary one for any artist to hold in order to aspire to create great art. Yet, we also have to admit that such an equation is not to be found in traditional Jewish thought, in which creative living is equated with Torah, rather than with culture. We have been pushed to consider whether Judaism is “counter-cultural” in an even more radical sense. A faithful Jew must wonder whether it is possible to assign a sufficiently high value to culture so as to make its production on the highest level a supreme desideratum, and, yet, not fall into a modern day version of idolatry.

So the question becomes how to discuss the cultural development of Judaism while at the same time remaining faithful to its counter-cultural calling. It is in this spirit that the following discussion, “The Avodah of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”—focusing primarily on the visual arts—is offered.

This essay takes its title—with its intentional mistranslation—and some of its inspiration from the classic essay by Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.”⁵ Benjamin reflected on the meaning of art and the status of art objects in the modern age, an age of “mechanical reproductions”, and, not surprisingly, the age of the emergence of photography and film as the predominant art forms. In relating to some of his insights, I would like, first, to advance some propositions about the concerns of the Torah as a religious system, that is, as a system of symbolic actions which embody basic truths about God and reality and that directs Israel toward certain orientations regarding those truths.

Uniqueness and Reproduction in the Torah

The Torah is intensely concerned with reproduction and duplication. Reproduction involves repetition. It is equally concerned with the meaning of

4 Eliezer Schweid offers an excellent discussion of the urgency of this belief as expressed in the work of modern Jewish writers and thinkers in his “*Ha-omanut k’ba ‘ayah kiyyumit ba-hagut ha-y’hudit shel ha-z’man he-hadash (Iyyun ba-hagut shel S”Y Agnon, A”D Gordon v’Franz Rosenzweig,*” (Hebrew) in David Cassuto, editor, *Omanut Ve-Yahadut*, Bar Han University, 1989.

5 In his *Illuminations*, Edited and with an Introduction by Hannah Arendt, Translated by Harry Zohn, Schocken, 1969, pp. 217-251.

oneness and uniqueness. Our Torah is determined to proclaim the reality of the Oneness of the True God and the possibility of walking and talking with that God. The uniqueness of the relationship between Israel and God lies in the way Israel handles the challenge of relating Uniqueness and Reproduction. So the Torah begins by explaining that the special status of humans derives from their being created as duplicates of God—in God’s Image—**בצלם א-להים**—*b’tselem elohim* (Gen. 1: 27). The first mitzvah of the Torah, according to our Tradition, is the command to humans to reproduce themselves. The Tradition tells us that the last mitzvah of the Torah is to create reproductions, copies of the Torah itself.⁶ This is the Torah that was given by the One God not once, but twice, for Moses was commanded to reproduce the Tablets he had broken so that God could repeat the words that were written the first time.⁷ And, of course, the Torah must recapitulate itself—through Moses’ Deuteronomy—**משנה תורה**—*mishneh ha-torah* (Deut. 17: 18). in order for it to become complete. The Torah is to be passed on to succeeding copies of the Children of Israel through its constant repetition—“And you shall teach them repeatedly (**ושננתם**—*v’-shinantam*) to your children” (Deut. 6: 7). The unique Jewish institution of Shabbat creates a temporal cycle of weekly repetition that overrides the seasonal cycles embedded in Nature. When Israel sanctifies the Shabbat, Israel reproduces the unique, primal, Divine Shabbat from the beginning of Creation. And when Israel celebrates its Festivals, it reproduces unique moments foundational to its own creation. The mystical tradition works out manifold expressions of the truth that all that is below is really a reflection reproducing that which is above.⁸ How could it be otherwise,

6 See for example, *Sefer ha-hinnukh*, ed. C. Chavel, Jerusalem, 1990, p. 55 (*Mitzvah* 1) and pp. 731-733 (*Mitzvah* 613).

7 See Ex. 34:1, “And God said to Moses, engrave for yourself two tablets of stones, just like the first ones, and I will write on the tablets those words that were on the original tablets which you shattered!”

8 A common medieval term for this correspondence is *dugma*. Thus R. Moshe de Leon can say, “For you should know that Gan Eden is in the world and is the exemplum of (*dugmat*) the two worlds, an exemplum of this world and an exemplum of the upper world.” (In *Shnei kuntresim I’rabbi moshe de leon*, published by Gershom Scholem, *kovetz al yad*, n.s. 8 (1976), p. 3.50.] On this parallelism as reflected in nature, ritual, and, especially, kabbalistic historiosophy, see the essays, and notes thereto, by E. R. Wolfson, “Re/Membering the Covenant: Memory, Forgetfulness, and the Construction of History in the Zohar,” and M. Idel, “Some Concepts of Time and History in Kabbalah.” In *Jewish History and Jewish Memory: Essays in Honor of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi*, edited by Elisheva Carlebach, John M. Efron and David N. Myers, pp. 214-

when even according to the simplest meaning of the text, the Mysterious Being of the Unique God of Israel is expressed through a name which reproduces itself — אהיה אשר אהיה — *Ehyeh asher ehyeh* (Ex. 3: 14)?

The manufacture of holiness requires a production line of repetitive acts—called rituals or *mitzvot*—formulated and performed again and again— עולת שבת בשבתו — *olat shabbat b'shabbato*—“a complete sacrifice of the Sabbath each Sabbath” (Num. 28: 10)—by interchangeable laborers, day after day, generation after generation. That which is meaningful must be repeated and reproduced.⁹ That which is loved must be reiterated. When God calls out to Abraham, God calls, “Abraham, Abraham!” (Gen. 22: 11) and Rashi (there) quotes the midrash—“לשון חיבה הוא, שכופל את שמו”—“This is the language of love, for God repeats his name.”

But, of course herein lies a danger and a paradox. For repetition also degrades the special and unique. Thus the Talmud says, כל אומר שמע-שמע, מורים-מורים, משתיקין אותו — *Modim* [in the *Amidah*] should be silenced, for this impugns the Oneness of God.¹⁰ Degradation of the unique damages not only the *sancta*, but also damages the soul, for it breeds boredom and the loss of meaning, spiritual fatigue and despair: כי צו לצו, צו לצו, קו לקו, קו לקו, ועיר שם, ועיר שם — “For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little.” (Isa. 28: 10) Or one might refer to the famous words of Kohelet, which need no repeating.¹¹

246 and 153-188. Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press/University Press of New England, 1998. On the level of the individual, see Scholem's study, “Tselem: The Concept of the Astral Body,” in his *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts of the Kabbalah*, translated by Joachim Neugroschel, edited by Jonathan Chipman, Schoken, 1991, pp. 251-273.

9 See Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, Harper & Row, 1957, p. H17-113. And see, on Eliade, J. Z. Smith, *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religion*, Leiden: E. J. Brill; 1978, p. 92.

10 BT Ber. 33b, Meg. 25a.

11 Both the value of copying and the danger of repetition are expressed by the author of the *Sefer ha-hinnukh* (op. cit., p. 472) in his discussion of the rationale for the commandment to copy Torah scroll: “... and we were commanded, each one of us in Israel, to make an effort for this [*mitzvah*], even if one's ancestors have already left one [Torah scroll] for him, so that the scrolls should multiply among us, and we will be able to lend them to those who cannot afford to acquire them, but also in order that every one in Israel may read from new scroll, lest they be turned off [*pen t'kuts nafsham*] from reading from the old scrolls left to them by their ancestors.”

Uniqueness and Reproduction in Art

Art, too, may be considered a discipline obsessed with the problem of the relationship between uniqueness and replication. This is clearly the case with regard to the mimetic tradition. The work of art is conceived therein as a “representation” of some aspect of the real.

“Can you tell me what *mimesis*—imitation—is?” asks Socrates of Glaucon in Plato’s *Republic* [Bk. X, 595ff].¹² And Socrates proceeds with his analysis:

“Let us take any common instance; there are beds and tables in the world—plenty of them are there not? ...

“But there are only two ideas or forms of them—one the idea of a bed, the other of a table.”

Socrates explains that these forms are made by the greatest artist of all—“One who is the maker of all the works of all other workmen ... For this is he who is able to make not only vessels of every kind, but plants and animals, himself and all other things—the earth and heaven and the thing which are in heaven or under the earth; he makes the gods also.”

All manifestations in the real world are imitations of these created forms. They are reflections of the Forms, made by craftsmen. And finally, when an artist then makes an image of a table, he is imitating an imitation.

Socrates then explains the difference between Divine art and human art—

“God, whether from choice or from necessity, made one bed in nature and one only... He desired to be the real maker of a real bed, not a particular maker of a particular bed, and therefore He created a bed which is essentially and by nature one only.”

In this view the artist is condemned to the manufacture of pale imitations, images that may be deceptively engaging indeed, they must be engaging—in order to attract our attention to them and deflect it away from the real.

The artist will attempt to counter that s/he—and the viewer, too,—is well aware that the table painted on the canvas is not a table, but the picture of a table. “Must I,” protests the artist, “paint onto the picture an explicit disclaimer, “This is not a table?””¹³

12 *The Dialogues of Plato*, Translated by Benjamin Jowett, The University of Chicago, 1952, pp. 427-428.

13 See the famous painting by Rene Magritte, *The Treason of Images*, 1928-29 (Wm. N. Copley Collection, NY), in which he places a realistic rendering of a smoker’s pipe over the explanation, “*Ceci n’est pas une pipe.*” (“This is not a pipe.”) See figure 1.

But the dialectic is not so easily dismissed. Artists have always tried to capture, to image, to express—which is to say, to represent, to create a copy of the singular. Even when post-romantic art began questioning the hierarchies assumed in deciding what qualified as “singular,” when it began asking “Why not paint a worker, a road, a train station?”—even when the everyday became a fit subject for art, the artistic enterprise was still committed to giving to that which was not singular an image or expression that was singular. The importance of creating a singular expression tended to call for the creation of works that could claim to be unique. Walter Benjamin called that quality of the art object its “aura.”

But the paradox persisted. For that very quality which made for a successful work of art—its formal adequacy to its expressive demands—was precisely the quality that allows for and actually calls for the duplication of the work. Only a work of formal coherence—defined in whatever way a culture chooses—can claim attention as a significant object—as a work of art. But any work whose formal coherence can be discerned is, thus, a work that can be and will be copied. To make a work of art is to make a work that can be copied. The motive for copying it may be studious—to learn from it the lessons of its creation; it may be to render homage to the message of the work or the skill of the artist; or it may be to exploit the increased demand for the work, fed by its aura of uniqueness, but thwarted by its singular existence. Whether from exalted motives or base ones, some will make copies of art works because reproducibility is inherent in the works’ quality as art. This is the premise which underlies, not only paintings, for instance, but also all performable works.¹⁴

It is also the premise that applies to all attempts to escape the identification of art with imitation. Artists in modern times tried to create abstract works, that is, works with no clear tangible referent. It was hoped that these works would partake of a spiritual or existential uniqueness no longer accessible through figurative, mimetic art. After a short time, however, the art world turned away in dismay from second-generation practitioners of abstraction and expressionism, finding that all these works tended to look and feel the same, as if they were mere empty copies of earlier such works.

One alternative was to pursue the lead of the enigmatic controversialist, Marcel Duchamp. His work exhilarated, outraged, or confounded his public through his frank admission that it is impossible to overcome the paradox

14 Michael Ayrton touches on some of this in his Introduction to the volume, *Art Themes and Variations: Five Centuries of Interpretations and Re-creations*, with text by K. E. Maison, Abrams, n.d., pp. 7-29.

of uniqueness and reproduction. He created unique works from reproductions and reproduced multiples of selected objects. It is noteworthy that the Museum of Modern Art proudly holds a *third-hand copy* of a ready-made bicycle wheel once appropriated by Duchamp and presented as a work of art.¹⁵

Duchamp's strategy could be seen as an attempt to clearly identify the threat posed by art's inclination toward reproduction and to defeat it by embracing it. Opponents have accused this approach of cynical nihilism. But, ironically, Duchamp's gambit can also be seen as having reinvested religious concerns into an art tradition that had failed to persuade its devotees of its interest in religion and spirituality or its ability to express these experiences. Of course, the kind of religious experience offered was not the kind to which we were accustomed. Instead of beatific communion with the exalted, Duchamp offered an esoteric, "gnostic" test of salvation. If one accepted Duchamp's revelation, one was saved. If one rejected it, one was consigned to the camp of the Sons of Darkness. His enterprise was imbued with typically eschatological features. As mentioned, one such feature was his defeat of art's destructive forces through their embrace. The end of art as we knew it was upon us. The new dispensation involved, not the creation of unique—read: "holy"—objects, but the raising of the sparks of uniqueness from those humble, fallen objects such as hat racks and urinals. The holy and the mundane were intertwined. There could be no sanctification without degradation, no Holy Mother without pornography and excrement.¹⁶ This operation of sanctification was accomplished by assuming for the artist, curator, dealer and exhibition space the sacerdotal status of priests and temples. If sanctity involves the transformation of that which is unreal and imitative into a realm of truly singular, then the gallery and museum are the true holy spaces, transforming any object offered up in their premises. If a bicycle wheel is on the street, it is not art. Chosen by the artist and brought to the Temple, that is, the gallery, the wheel becomes infused with aura.

When we consider Damien Hirst's sheep encased in formaldehyde we wonder whether it would be appropriate to inscribe upon it, "This is not a sheep."¹⁷ Perhaps it would be better to consider it an example of the renewal of

15 See figure 2.

16 Consider Chris Ofili's notorious *The Holy Virgin Mary* (1996), a painting in the African figurative folkstyle, depicting Mary, with turds of elephant dung attached to the surface. This painting caused much outrage when exhibit at The Brooklyn Museum show, "Sensation," in 1999. See figure 4.

17 Hirst exhibited his *Away from the Flock*—a formaldehyde-filled glass case, in which a dead sheep floated in suspension—at the Brooklyn Museum show mentioned

that once essential category of service—*avodah*—a category which we either quickly or queasily dismiss: I mean “sacrifice.” Here we have the offering of the animal within the sacred precinct, offered out of the desire to “only connect” and perhaps also arousing primal feelings of guilt and shame. Encased in its preservative, this offering can never be consumed; it is a very different kind of *olat tamid*—perpetual, total offering. And the stench is gone. Is there, instead, a *rei’ah nihoaḥ*—an acceptable, pleasing smell?

But the question, then, is, “Pleasing to whom?” For as the artist presents his ceremonial act and product, whether as supplicant or as priest, we may imagine him, as if in a remake of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, intoning the following incantation:

לא על אֱנֹשׁ רְחִיצְנָא וְלֹא עַל בַּר אֱלֹהִין סְמִיכְנָא
אֵלֶּא עַל בְּרִי דְאַנְשֵׁי וְאַשׁוּקָא

“Not in God do we put our trust nor on any angel
do we rely, but on the people and the market.”

The artists and their public help each other satisfy their most urgent needs. The swings between scandal and adulation experienced by the public become patterned and scripted into a recurrent ritual of entertainment. The artist is no longer craftsperson or creator, but star; the source of his or her brilliance is no longer skill or soul, but ego.

A work such as Andy Warhol’s *Marilyn Diptych*¹⁸ eschews the pretence of scandal and, instead, accepts all of this as given: the nod to religion, the obsessive focus on a movie star, and the invitation to the viewer to imagine themselves as the creative director of a monthly glossy magazine, pouring over multiple stills to pick out the one example that perhaps still bears enough aura in it to lay claim to a moment of singularity, or, in the terms of Warhol’s bland, but apparently genuine generosity, to “fifteen minutes of fame.” Aura thus becomes a marketing tool.

A Sugya—Talmudic discussion in BT *Rosh HaShanah* 24a-b—On Making an Image

The Mishnah, in describing how the New Moon was consecrated, relates that Rabban Gamliel, the Head of the Court, would interrogate eye-witnesses to the appearance of the New Moon by showing them pictures of the phases of the moon. The Talmud begins with a strong sense that using such pictures was forbidden: שְׂרִי וּמִי שְׂרִי—*U-mi shari?*—“Could anyone think this is permitted?”

above. See figure 3.

18 Painted 1962, hanging in the Tate Gallery, London. See figure 5.

The question reflects the strong iconoclastic tendency expressed in various sources. Thus, in the *Mekhilta*¹⁹ to the Second Commandment we find a collection of Biblical verses prohibiting various objects and images of idolatry made with various materials, including gods, celestial beings, signs of the zodiac, natural forms in heaven, earth and sea and phantasms, whether in precious or common materials, whether in relief or engraved. The midrash concludes:

כל כך רדף הכתוב אחר יצר הרע, שלא ליתן לו
מקום למצוא לו אמתלת היתר

Scripture pursued the Evil Inclination to such a degree,
in order to prevent it from finding any excuse to be permissive.

Later the *Mekhilta*²⁰ explains the verse,

לא תעשון אתי, אלהי כסף ואלהי זהב לא תעשו לכם

Do not make [anything] with Me; do not make gods of
silver and gold for yourselves” [Ex. 20; 19] -by saying:

שלא תאמר הואיל ונתנה תורה רשות לעשות
בבית המקדש, הריני עושה בבתי כנסיות ובבתי
מדרשות, ת"ל לא תעשו לכם. ד"א, לא תעשו
לכם- שלא תאמרו הרי אנו עושין לנו, כדרך
שאחרים עושין במדינות, ת"ל לא תעשו לכם.

To prevent you from saying, “Since the Torah gives permission to do this in the Temple, I will, then, do so in the synagogues and houses of study”, the Teaching says, “Do not make for yourselves”. Another matter: So that you should not say, “We may make these for decoration, as others do abroad,” the Teaching says, “Do not make for yourselves”.

The *Mekhilta d'rabban shimon bar yohai*²¹ applies this lesson to the first half of the verse:

לא תעשון אתי- אם לעבדן כבר נאמר לא תעשה לך
פסל וגוי מה אני מקיים לא תעשון אתי? לא תאמר כדרך
שאחרים עושין לנו... כך אני אעשה, ת"ל לא תעשון
אתי - לא תעשון ואפילו לנוי

19 *Yitro. Masekhta debahodesh. Parashah vav*. Horovitz-Rabin edition, Jerusalem, 1998, p. 225.

20 *Ibid.*, *Parashah yod*. p. 241.

21 Epstein—Melamed edition, p. 248 as an addition to p. 156.

“Do not make with Me” [Ex. 20: 20]—if this verse were [written] to prohibit their worship, it [would not have] already said, “You shall not make an idol...” [Ex. 20: 3] Then how do I understand “Do not make with Me” ... this is to prevent you from saying, Just as others make images for beauty ... so shall I do so. The verse speaks to teach you, “Do not make with Me,” ‘do not make’ even [if only] for beauty.

The Babylonian Talmud in *Shabbat* [149a] even records the view that the very act of looking at pictures is forbidden:

ודיוקנה עצמה אף בחול אסור להסתכל בה
משום שנא' אל תפנו אל האלילים, מאי גמרא,

It is forbidden to gaze at a picture even on the weekday, for it says, “Do not turn toward the idols”. [Lev. 19: 4] What is the derivation? Said R. Hanin—Do not turn to what you conceive on your own.²²

The *rishonim* are divided as to whether the images prohibited are idolatrous or not. But Rashi, for example, describes the pictures as murals depicting animals, or else narrative paintings, such as a picture of David and Goliath.²³

We can see that the ground for our gemara’s surprise is quite solid. The *sugya* finally offers a number of possibilities that making images is indeed forbidden, but having images made by others is permitted, or that owning three dimensional images is indeed forbidden, but that it is permissible to own and perhaps even make flat images, or that all this is forbidden under the suspicion of idolatry, but that Rabban Gamliel was above suspicion, or that he availed himself of a technical loophole in the way his images were made and stored, or that everyone may benefit from his example since to own and display (and perhaps to make) images for educational purposes is permitted.

In other words, the gemara does not come up with one definitive explanation for Rabban Gamliel’s actions. (It should be noted, by the way, that the whole discussion seems to have taken place 300 years or more after the fact.) No one answer strikes to the very core of the issue. All possibilities are brought to bear, from whatever angle occurs to the

22 This is Rashi’s reading. According to the *Arukh*, the reading is—*al t’fanu el mi-da’atkhem* - “do not clear God out of your thoughts” See Maimonides’ Guide, I V; 51, which seems to read the verse as does the *Arukh*, but applies it to mundane activities. (Rif has the derivation in the name of Rav (!).)

23 See Maimonides, Yad. Hit. A.Z. 2;2, and Rabbenu Asher. But see Tosafot A.z. S.v. h”g. These sources are discussed from a different perspective in Efraim E. Urbach’s, “The Rabbinical Laws of Idolatry in the Second and Third Centuries in the light of Archaeological and Historical Facts,” *Israel Exploration Journal*, 9:3 (1959): 149-165, and 9:4: 229-245.

sugya, without a sense that it has a firm, coherent outlook. The blanket prohibition on images is felt to be practically unsustainable in the face of the record of Rabban Gamliel's actions and in the face of the realities of life.

What's more, the *sugya*, before offering its final bouquet of distinctions, consists of a series of steps whereby it records a distinction offered in the name of Abaye, challenges that distinction, records a different distinction in Abaye's name, challenges that one, and so forth, three or four²⁴ times. Again, the relation between these different teachings is unclear. Was Abaye presenting a series of qualifications that form a coherent whole, or was he struggling with finding the right answer, disposing of each distinction in favor of the next as he responded to challenges from his anonymous interlocutor?²⁵ The commentators were unequivocal on this.²⁶

Without attempting to clarify all the issues raised by this text, I would like to focus on one of the teachings in the *sugya*. While I have indicated that there is a kind of unpersuasive, catch-all quality to the *sugya* as we have it, I do not think it follows that the various positions disposed of by the *sugya* should be considered as devoid of conceptual value. I follow the old traditional insistence on asking, "What is the *hava amina*?"—"What is the reasoning of the initial proposition?" even though that proposition may be rejected. This will be helpful for appreciating the approach of Maimonides, to be discussed a bit further on.

I would like to deal with only the first of Abaye's teachings. The gemara opens by asking how Rabban Gamliel could do something clearly forbidden. We note that the gemara does not appeal to the Second Commandment directly. Rather it cites the later verse in Exodus 20: 20: "Do not make with Me" In other words, it would seem to be unthinkable that Rabban Gamliel could be in violation of the explicit prohibition of idolatry. No one would suggest that he was an idolator. But the gemara reads the Torah as having created its own fence around the law, forbidding all non-idolatrous images of anything

24 R. Huna, son of R. Idi, offers a deduction he has made from a teaching that he heard from Abbaye.

25 On the relationship between Abaye and the anonymous questions, see David (Weiss-)Halivni. *M'korot u-m'sorot: Mo'ed—Yoma—Hagigah*. Jerusalem, 1975, pp. 391-392.

26 Tosafot. S.v. *lo asrah torah*, states that all Abaye's statements must be taken together. But other commentators suggest the second possibility (see reference in Ritva), or that this may be a basic divergence between the *Sh'iltot* [Yitro, §571 who seems to read the *sugya* as all-of-a-piece, and the Rif and Rambam who don't. *Heshek shlomo* on Rambam, *Avodah zarah* 43a, s.v. *gemara*].

that can at all be connected to the Divine as a helper or attendant, presumably out of concern that they might be elevated to divine status. Says the gemara:

Is this allowed?—seeing that it is written, Ye shall not make with me, [Ex. 20: 20] which we interpret, ‘Ye shall not make the likeness of my attendants’— כַּדְמוּת שְׂמֹשֵׁי -?

Now while the *midrashim* on this verse which I quoted before seem to derive a blanket prohibition, the gemara’s question already makes explicit a qualifying condition: Only beings attendant to the Divine are assumed prohibited. Abbaye further qualifies the prohibition in surprising ways:

Abbaye replied: The Torah forbade only those attendants of which it is possible to make copies,

It is possible to read this as a standard halakhic exchange. A claim is made that something should be included in an accepted prohibition. In response the prohibition is defined narrowly so that the action in question escapes the reach of the *issur*. This is called “finding a *heteir*”. But I would venture to push beyond the mechanics of the discussion to try to uncover the conceptual underpinnings of the newly revised definition of the prohibition. When Abbaye offers his new reading of the Torah’s words, what values does he assume the Torah really takes seriously? Abbaye’s teaching seems to be based on two premises:

1) Just as the Torah only mandates actions that are performable, it also only prohibits actions which are performable. 2) Image-making is to be defined as the making of an exact copy or reproduction. Anything else is not to be taken seriously as an image.

Therefore, argues Abbaye, if the Torah indeed prohibits image making, it must prohibit only the kinds of images that a human can really make. And image making is conceived of as the making of a copy. Only certain things can be copied exactly. An image of the moon, such as the one displayed by Rabban Gamliel, is not an exact reproduction of the moon. It is merely צִיּוּר דּוֹגְמָתָה—as Rashi phrases it—merely the picturing of its likeness, a copy of a copy. The force of Abbaye’s contention can be further appreciated when we add the comments of the *P’nei Y’hoshu’a* on the Mishnah.²⁷ He points out that the images Rabban Gamliel had in his chamber were probably of crescent moon shapes. Thus there could be no mistaking the im-

27 Ad loc., s. v. *Ba-Mishnah*.

age as a real attempt to copy the moon. Rather it was an image of how the moon appears to us. Abbaye contends that the imitation of appearances does not worry the Torah. Only the making of a real replica of a Divine attendant is prohibited.

But what beings or attendants could the Torah possibly mean? A baraita is quoted in support of Abbaye—**כדתניא**—as it has been taught”:

A man may not make a house in the form of the Temple, or an exedra in the form of the Temple hall, or a court corresponding to the Temple court, or a table corresponding to the [sacred] table or a candlestick corresponding to the [sacred] candlestick, but he may make one [24b] with 5 or 6 or 8 lamps, but [one] with seven he should not make, even of other metals.

The reference is not to any celestial bodies or heavenly figures. Nor is it to any priestly figure. Rather, the Temple itself, the Sacred Space in Jerusalem, is God’s worldly attendant. The Torah’s extension of the prohibition against idolatry to include making images/copies of God’s attendants means that it is prohibited to make an exact reproduction of one of the items in the Temple.²⁸

This teaching is hard to understand. In what sense is the Temple or the table or even the Menorah, God’s attendant? And how can it be that there is a suspicion that making reproductions of objects of the Temple, objects specifically dedicated to the holy service—Avodah—of the One True God, will lead to idolatry?²⁹ If idolatry is defined narrowly—as the mistaken worship of something other than God, it is hard to see the worry here. But perhaps another explanation is possible, employing broader considerations of what might be wrong with acts which may not be directed to false gods, but might still be included in the notion of prohibited worship.

The concern may not at all be that the production of that image may lead someone who views it into idolatrous practices. The concern may be focused on the very act of image-making itself. The discussion in Plato subtly introduces the element of competition between God and Humans with regard to the act of creating images. God does not want to be the maker of mere copies, like a human artist. God wants to be better than that. God wants to make the real thing. Artists, by definition, make copies of copies. But

28 See *Minhat hinnukh* §39 and §254 on whether the prohibition extends to implements for which the Torah gives no specific size or form, and the discussion that follows.

29 Indeed, see *Mekor mayyim hayyim* on S.A. Y.D. 141, SA. Y.D. 141, where this is not accepted as the right explanation.

an artist who thinks he can reproduce what God makes is guilty of the sin of hubris. This idea of God and Humans competing, most especially in the arena of knowledge, culture and art, is not merely a conceit of the classical Greeks. We can think of the beginning of *B'reshit*, when God worries about Humans remaining in the Garden after they have become too much like God—**הן אדם היה כאחד ממנו**— Lo! Humans have become as one of us ... [Gen. 3: 22] The Tower of Babel story lends itself to such a reading as well. In Rabbinic sources we find many ways that God trumps humans as an artist. For example the Babylonian Talmud in Berakhot 10a re-reads Hannah's praise in 1 Sam. 2:2—**ואין צור כא-להינו**—"There is no Rock like our God" as —**ואין צייר כא-להינו**—"There is no artist like our God"—as the gemara explains—

A human being makes a figure [**צר צורה**] on a wall, but he cannot invest it with breath and spirit, bowels and intestines. But the Blessed Holy One makes a figure within a figure [**צר צורה בתוך צורה**] and puts within it breath, [etc.]

From a religious point of view, the artistic act is inherently problematic. The "impassioned God" (Ex. 20: 4)—**א-ל קנא**—is incensed when Israel worships other gods or makes images of gods. After all, who shall make a copy of whom? The relation between original and copy is a hierarchical one that must remain clear. The art of making a reproduction must be a conscious act of subservience and homage, rather than one of competition and displacement. Artistic production is thus to be brought under control and direction. The great outlet for sanctioned artistry was the making of the Tabernacle, and then, the Temple. The Tabernacle included all kinds of objects and images, but they were fashioned as commanded by God. So R. Yehuda Halevi³⁰ can claim that the sin of the Golden Calf, on the other hand, was not that the Israelites worshiped an idol, but that they engaged in artistic production for God's service without God's sanction. The impertinence of the Israelites was to arrogate to themselves the creative prerogative of God. They chose to make a ceremonial object that lacked the connectedness to the Divine of an authorized copy. The making of the Menorah and other items are described in the midrash as acts of copying. Moses was shown an image that could be copied. The *P'nei y'hoshu'a* reminds us of the tradition that the Temple itself was conceived of as a copy of the Celestial Temple. We are authorized to make a copy of that Heavenly Temple, but not a copy of the copy?³¹

30 *Kuzari* 1: 97, 99

31 *P'nei Y'hoshu'a*, s.v. *Sham, amar abbayei*. On the traditions of the Heavenly Temple parallel to the earthly one, see the essay by Victor Aptowitz, "The Celestial Temple as Viewed in the Aggadah," in *Binah: Studies in Jewish Thought*, Vol. 2, edited

Maimonides' Copy of this Law

This brings us to the Rambam. In his compendium of *Hilkhot avodat kokhavim* it is clear that he does not accept all the suggested distinctions offered in our *sugya*. He prohibits the making of the human form only, and then only if it is three-dimensional. The moon and stars, etc., are forbidden even in flat images. Images made for the purpose of **נוי**—decoration—are harmless and permitted. It would seem that he read the *sugya* as a progressive argument, annihilating previous hypotheses as it proceeded. It is therefore intriguing that while he does not mention the prohibition of copying the Temple objects in these laws regarding idolatry—presumably because that suggestion had been rejected—the prohibition nevertheless reappears, but with a different justification, in another context.

Chapter Seven of The Laws of the Temple—**הלכות בית הבחירה**—deals with the commandment to treat the Temple with **יראה**—awe and reverence. One should dress properly when entering the Temple. The space of the Temple should not be used for shabby or frivolous purposes or acts. The imperative to treat the Temple Mount with reverence results in numerous constraints applied to behavior and appearance.

It is here that Rambam resuscitates his prohibition against copying Temple objects. His **חידוש**—his new insight is to claim that while the talmudic discussion that places this prohibition within the discourse of idolatry may be rejected, nevertheless, there still remains another cogent reason to preserve this tradition. The new context is **מורא מקדש**—reverence for the Temple.

Rambam's decision to include this law here, along with his organization of all the material in this chapter, is instructive. We can see that Rambam has built a set of ever widening circles around the place of the Temple. In so doing he establishes a literary-halakhic equivalent of an aura around the Temple. And so, in the very way he goes about teaching about the mitzvah of Reverence for the Sanctuary, he has fulfilled that same mitzvah.

Consider: The first six laws he cites involve behavior within Temple space. Next Rambam, in *Halakhah* 7, explains that the place of the Temple is still to be respected although the structure that once defined its space is no longer standing. Then, in *Halakhah* 8- 9, Rambam describes how that location is a focal, orienting point, radiating outward. One must not act disrespectfully, even outside of the Temple space, if the offensive behavior is directed toward that space or location.

Finally, in *Halakhah* 10, Rambam cites our law from *Rosh Hashanah*. What is its place here? The prohibited act of making reproductions of Temple items by Joseph Dan, pp. 1-29, Praeger, 1989. Compare also, *Hebrews* 8: 4-5. 9: 23ff. 10: 1ff.

does not refer to acts that take place within Temple space or that are directed toward the place of the Temple—**מִקּוֹם הַמִּקְדָּשׁ חִידוּשׁ**. But, according to Rambam's **חִידוּשׁ**—his new interpretation, it has everything to do with protecting the aura around the Temple, the aura that Rambam has so carefully constructed. Rambam posits that the concern of this prohibition is not the lure of idolatry, nor the hubris of the artist. The concern is simply that reproductions will destroy the aura of singularity. Making a copy of the Temple's elements will destroy the reverence we are commanded to feel toward the Temple.

Read from this perspective, the continuation of this law takes on a somewhat different coloration. How should we read the permission to make any menorah which does not exactly reproduce the one in the Temple? One could simply read it as an allowance based on rigid *halakhic* definitions. The way to avoid a prohibition is to modify the form of the menorah, even if only slightly. A *heteir* has been found. But this permission is enclosed within laws that speak of more than prohibition and permission. They speak about a positive *mitzvah* to act with reverence. Imagine, then, this last provision to be not a mere granting of permission, but a call to a certain kind of aesthetic engagement. A person should avoid trying to copy slavishly or competitively. “Do not make an exact copy of the Menorah. But one can produce a new form, associated to the traditional form of the Menorah, yet subtly different. Yes, one can do this if one works in the spirit of reverence for the holy.”

I would not claim that this is precisely what Rambam had in mind. In keeping with this law, I am not trying to reproduce his thought exactly, but to create something both intimately associated with his approach, yet somewhat different. Still, I derive some encouragement for this approach by considering one more element in Rambam's discussion of Reverence for the Sanctuary.

In Rambam's telling, this *mitzvah* of Reverence produces not only prohibitions and permissions. It also mandates certain behaviors. So in *Halakhah* 4, Rambam details how the Temple functionaries must leave the Temple after they have completed their offices. To show reverence they are to exit the Sanctuary slowly, walking backwards, looking towards the Holy Chambers as one might take leave of royalty. This is fairly straightforward. This *halakhah* is superficially related to the one preceding it, a restatement of Tractate *Middot* 11: 2, which regulates the pathway of lay visitors to the Temple. But there is nothing obvious about Rambam's inclusion of this law in this chapter. Indeed, this is another beautiful example of the subtle way Rambam could infuse a new way of understanding into a *halakhah* simply by means of his choice of placement and organization. There is no textual warrant for including this

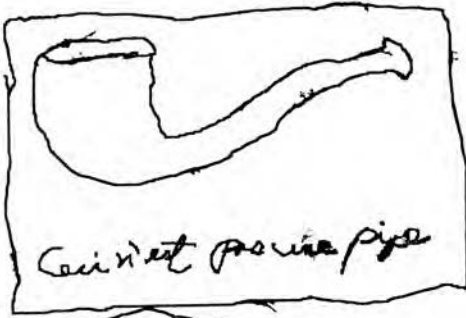
halakhah under this rubric. The mishnaic basis for it does not include this explanation, nor do any commentators.³²

This, again, is the Rambam's **הירוש**—his own novel teaching. By incorporating this mishnah as *Halakhah* 3 of the chapter on Reverence, Rambam is stating that requirements of this mitzvah do not only generate behavioral constraints, but also engender a kind of sacred choreography, a solemn pageant, performed by all who visit. Two circles flow in stately procession, turning in opposite directions, so that they are sure to intersect. One circle includes the fortunate. The other includes those beset by misfortune. The script dictates that the fortunate ones must ask after their counterparts in the other circle. They are to listen to their sorrows, troubles and shortcomings and then offer them words of solace and courage. In the programmed retreat of the Temple functionaries, their gaze must be fixed on the Temple. The procession of the masses of Israel, on the other hand, forces them to face each other. How is this a fulfillment of **מורא מקדש**—Reverence of the Sanctuary? The answer is that the way Israel is bidden to face each other is with the reverent invocation of **השוכן בבית הזה**—The One Who Dwells in this House. In this formalized dance, always repeated, but, as life unfolds, never the same, *hesed*—lovingkindness—and *yir'ah*—reverence—are partners. Children of Israel face each other just as the cherubim face each other. The space between their faces is the space sanctified by **גלוי שכינה**—the revelation of Divine Presence. Thus, in the end, Israel finds a way to replicate the very image of God's attendants—**כרמות שמשיי**—and thereby joins their ranks—**ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם**—Let them make Me a Sanctuary so that I may dwell within them. [Ex. 25: 8]

Perhaps this is Rambam's insight: To recognize that **יראה**—reverence—makes possible an aesthetic practice that can aspire to something beyond the superficial category of **נוי**—decoration, or the discredited categories of exhibitionism, self aggrandizement and commodification. Instead of aspiring to the production of representations, such an aesthetic of reverence would, paradoxically, aspire to no less than the evocation of Presence.

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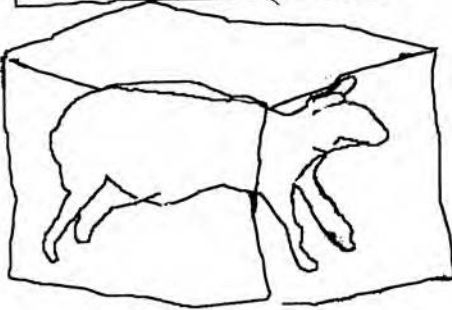
32 The *Rosh* (ad. loc.), for example, gives a different explanation.



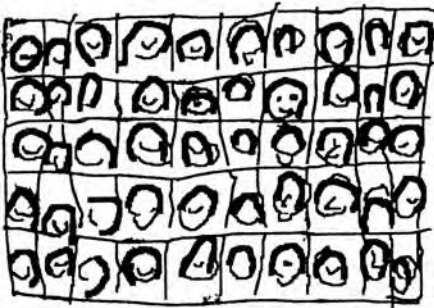
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Copies from reproductions of some words of art mentioned in this essay

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Music in a Sacred Place—Understanding the Second Temple’s Acoustics

By Joseph A. Levine

Introduction: cave or open-air

Michael Forsyth, a teacher and researcher of architecture, argues that “room acoustics have such an influence on musical composition and performance that the architectural traditions of different races, and hence the acoustic characteristics of their buildings, influenced fundamentally the type of music that they developed.”¹

Citing Wallace Clement Sabine,² Forsyth qualifies that claim as being dependent upon whether a particular region’s people lived in reed huts or cloth tents, wooden huts or stone houses. Following Otto von Simson he further specifies that, together with the acoustics of their dwellings, the architecture of a people’s worship spaces would determine whether their music developed primarily along melodic or rhythmic lines. Among such determinants are the height of a temple, the type of ceiling—high vaulted or low-roofed—and if its furnishings were heavy or light.³ Niaux, for example, a mountainside cave near Foix in the French Pyrenees dated back to the Magdalenian era of 13,500 years ago, contains a chamber formed by the crossroads of branching corridors carved by ancient underground streams. The natural acoustic ambience of this so-called *Salon Noir* (“black gallery”), a vaulted space 22 yards in diameter, amplifies sound without distortion. The cave may have been chosen not only as a safe repository for the animals exquisitely painted on its walls, but as a conducive venue for music-accompanied ceremonies as well.⁴

The modern concert hall may have developed—over the course of ages—from caves of prehistoric humankind, such as Niaux. Contrastingly, the theater (classical Greece offers ample evidence) originated in open-air gathering places. This differentiation is important because, as Michael Forsyth explains,

all auditoria [whether indoors or outdoors] fall into two groups: those with the acoustics of the cave; and those with the acoustics of the open air.⁵

1 Michael Forsyth. *Buildings for Music* (Cambridge, MA: the MIT Press), 1985:3.

2 Wallace Clement Sabine, “Melody and the Origin of the Musical Scale,” *Collected Papers on Acoustics* (Harvard University Press, 1922), reprinted Dover, New York, 1964:114.

3 Otto von Simson. *The Gothic Cathedral* (Princeton University Press), 1962:23.

4 Michael Fitzgerald, “Before History, Niaux’s Art,” *Wall Street Journal*, “Leisure and Arts,” July 19, 2011.

5 Forsyth, op. cit., page 3.

A recent experiment showed that the 5,000-year-old outdoor stone circle at Stonehenge in Wiltshire, England is ideal for listening to “trance” music. Its stones seem to provide acoustics perfectly suited to repetitive rhythms like those used in religious ceremonial music. Professor Rupert Till, an expert in sound technology at Huddersfield University in West Yorks, UK tested the effect, at first using a computer model of Stonehenge, and then a concrete replica of the circle. He reproduced the sound of someone speaking or clapping in the ancient circle, and the entire model-space resonated “almost like a wine glass will ring if you rub a wetted finger around its edge... a simple drum beat sounded incredibly dramatic... perhaps to accompany a burial ritual.”⁶

These acoustical findings bear directly upon our investigation of the Second Jerusalem Temple’s daily sacrificial rite and prayer service during the eight decades from completion of its Herodian renovation until its final destruction by Roman legions—allowing for a certain amount of play in the Talmud’s account of lengths, widths, depths, heights and materials. That is because rabbinic quantifications and measurements (like the ones given in *BT Middot*) concerning dimensions of the Temple Mount’s architectural components are problematic. They may not reflect any real historical information, having been written down late—in relation to the actual events and circumstances—even in the time of the Mishnah (codified around 200 C.E.). Subsequent commentaries on the Mishnaic information, in both the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds (codified around 400 and 500 C.E., respectively), present even greater challenges.⁷

Furthermore, among the diverse contemporary sources I’ve consulted while preparing this article, I found no consensus on the dimensions of either Solomon’s mid-10th-century B.C.E. edifice, Zerubbabel’s late-6th-century B.C.E. restoration or Herod’s late-1st-century B.C.E renovation—nor of their component parts or of the courtyards that surrounded them or even of the heights of the walls that delineated the various areas as well as the entire Temple complex. Simply put, no two sources agreed on all the particulars. Neither is it at all clear exactly when—and at whose hands—the Temple “Mount,” the open flat area around the Temple proper, was built up with immeasurable

6 “New Assumption: Stonehenge Functioned As a Music-Hall,” *Yiddish Forward*, January 16, 2008.

7 I am indebted to biblical archeologist Richard Freund, Professor at the Maurice Greenberg Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Hartford, for this and many other helpful observations after reading the manuscript of this article (series of personal communications, October 2009).

amounts of rubble as landfill. Therefore, our narrative will confine itself to relative dimensions and approximate dates.

Despite the scholarly vagueness about details, our central concern remains: was the singing heard in Herod's Temple during sacrificial and prayer services, sacred concert or sacred theater? In terms of acoustics, did the Second Temple's sites for levitical singing during sacrificial and prayer services more closely resemble that of an enclosed cave or that of an open-air gathering place? To answer the question we need to take a closer look at the Temple complex as a whole and at the two sites—a dais at the apex of three convergent courtyards, and a chamber at the end of a long colonnaded portico.

Distinguishing features of Herod's Temple and Mount

Initially, we might describe its overall configuration as a combination of Greek and Roman architectural preferences at the time—with some noticeable deviations.

- 1) Herod's Temple derived its perfectly balanced front facade from the symmetrical proportions of Greek style. Its impressive height and width mirrored the imposing Roman style. Its elegant columns, topped with crown-shaped gold capitals overflowing with bunches of carved grapevines, revealed Greek influence. So did its stark geometric whiteness against the blue mediterranean sky and the brown hills of the Judean countryside. Its "dazzling white marble, which gave it the look of a snow-capped mountain" (in Josephus's term)⁸ on sunny days, was probably created by means of a highly polished plaster coating applied to its yellowish Jerusalem-stone construction, as no marble was imported into Judea until after the Second Temple's destruction.⁹
- 2) The building's over-all rectangular shape echoed Graeco-Roman usage, but the floor levels of its inner chambers were stepped-up from front to back. These varying heights reflected the different functions of each interior area. To enter the building, one ascended a flight of stairs to the Porch or Vestibule (*ulam*). From there, one climbed another flight of stairs to the Holy Place or Sanctuary (*heikhal*), where holy vessels used by the Priests were stored, along with such biblically prescribed

8 Josephus, *The Jewish War*, tr. G.A. Williamson (New York: Penguin Books), 1959, Excursus VI.

9 Judith Magnes, in the PBS documentary, *Jerusalem in Time of Jesus* (Camden, NJ: WNJS-23), 12/18/06.

furnishings as the gold Table and seven-branched Menorah (Exodus 37: 10-24). From there, yet another stairway led up to a curtained-off chamber at the building's far end. In any other sector of the Graeco-Roman world, this room would have housed a statue of the temple's particular god, who looked out through the front portal as if overseeing whatever sacrifice was being offered on the facing open-air altar.¹⁰ This chamber at the rear of Herod's Temple was different. Called the *D'vir* (Holy of Holies, or Most Holy Place), it did not house a god-statue. In fact, neither had the *d'vir* in Solomon's Temple held anything other than the gold-encrusted Ark of the Covenant, an object of veneration that would disappear after the First Temple's sacking by Babylonian forces in the early 6th century B.C.E., along with its contents, the twin Tablets of the Law upon which it was believed that Moses had inscribed God's Ten Commandments at Sinai.

As for the two legendary Cherubim (*k'ruvim*) with human body and lion's head, carved of olive-wood, each over eight feet high with a collective wingspread of over 17 feet, they were non-portable items, having been built into the chamber.¹¹ Their "hovering over" the Ark gave rise to one designation for God, as *yosheiv ha-k'ruvim* (Dweller among the Cherubim"; psalms 80:2), and was in line with the common practice of 10th-century B.C.E rulers in Phoenicia (Byblos) and Canaan (Megiddo).¹² The *d'vir* would continue to remain empty in the subsequent Temples of Zerubbavel and Herod, except for one day each year—Yom Kippur—when the High Priest entered to make atonement for his own sins, for those of his family, his family, and the entire House of Israel (Leviticus 16:1-34).

- 3) Herod's Temple lacked the attached colonnade (peristyle) that customarily ringed Greek temples—like the Parthenon in Athens—all around. Instead, its decorative exterior pattern sublimated that three-dimensional approach into a relief-like pattern of pilasters (flat, column-

10 Carolyn Humphrey & Piers Vitebsky, *Sacred Architecture*, Kirsty Seymour-Ure, ed. (London: Duncan Baird Publishers), 1997, 3rd edition, 2003: 120.

11 The original Cherubim of the Wilderness Tabernacle (Exodus 25:17-21) were hammered out of the same block of pure gold from which the Ark was fashioned. Maimonides (*Moreh n'vukhim* iii.45) posits a rational purpose for their placement in the *d'vir*: to preserve popular Israelite belief in the existence of Divine Angels; there were two Cherubim so that the people would not be misled into accepting them as images of God (courtesy of Richard Wolberg, Hazzanet commentary on *T'rumah*, 2/17/07).

12 Yigal Yadin, s.v., "The Cherubim," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1972, 15: 950.

like piers that are partially embedded in the wall), starting at the front facade's corners and continuing along both side walls and the rear wall.¹³

- 4) It also avoided the Roman tendency to provide a large indoor space (sometimes domed, like the Pantheon in Rome) for worshipers to congregate. Instead, the Second Temple used its extensive surrounding areas to their fullest, walling them off into courtyards. The outermost (and largest) of these, the Court of the Gentiles, was reserved for non-Jews—except those with special permission—as in the case official foreign or governmental delegations.¹⁴ These privileged groups would be escorted to the Court of the Israelites, from which inner vantage point they could observe the priest-ministered sacrificial service, with its congregational responses to the levitical choir's psalm-singing in-between offerings.¹⁵
- 5) Like Solomon's and Zerubbabel's Temples that had stood in the same spot—and like Graeco-Roman temples still standing today in: Athens (Hephaistos, 449 B.C.E.), Nimes (Maison Carrée, 16 B.C.E.), Croatia (Pula, 14 B.C.E.) and Evora (Diana, 2nd century C.E.), Herod's Temple was built upon a massive podium accessed by steps—twelve, to be precise.¹⁶
- 6) When exiting the Temple through the golden doors of its *ulam*, one descended via these twelve steps, to an area where the enormous Altar of hewn stone (*mizbei'ah*) stood. The Altar area was divided into two sections—the Court of the Priests and the Court of the Israelites—separated by a low, stone-latticed railing (*soreig*). As mentioned, the Israelites' Court accommodated distinguished visitors. But it was also the court where male Jews offering sacrifices were required to attend the ceremony.¹⁷
- 7) From those inner courts, what looked like a miniature replica of the Temple facade complete with its oversized doors—but of bronze instead of gold—opened out onto a semi-circular dais with fifteen broad steps

13 Michael Avi-Yonah, *Model of Jerusalem in the First Century C.E.* (scale 1:50), Jerusalem: Israel Museum.

14 "The Letter of Aristeas," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. II, James H. Charlesworth, ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc.), 1985, verses 102-104.

15 Mishnah *Tamid* 7. 1-4.

16 Teddy Kollek and Moshe Pearlman, *Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa: Steimatzky's Agency, Limited), 1968: 105.

17 Leen Ritmeyer, "From Melchizedek to Herod," lecture delivered before the *Biblical Archeology Society Seminar*, on "Herod's Temple Mount," Marriott Hotel at King of Prussia, PA, 5/22/96.

built in semi-circular form around it. This was the beautiful Nicanor Gate, whose steps led down to the Court of Women. Despite its name this court, larger than the inner ones, could be entered and passed through by all ceremonially clean Jewish men and women. The Temple's day-to-day affairs were conducted here, since all administrative offices sat along the perimeters of this court.¹⁸

Fourteen steps down from various gates of the Womens Court brought one to the Outer Court—also called the Court of Gentiles—which formed the floor level of the Temple Mount plateau, expanded to the circumference of almost a mile under King Herod. It ran completely around the inner-walled Temple courts and was entered mainly from its southern gates. Countless thousands gathered in it on festivals, including gentiles from many lands, who were warned by inscriptions on stone, in Latin and Greek, not to proceed further on pain of death.¹⁹

- 8) Although the roof of Herod's Temple was flat—in keeping with Greek style—its side view revealed a significant lowering of roof level immediately behind the facade section covering the *ulam*. Paradoxically, the lower roof that covered the rest of the building coincided with interior raisings of the floor level in every chamber, front to back. Thus the *ulam* sat higher than the exterior Altar area, the *heikhal* sat higher than the *ulam*, and the *d'vir* sat highest of all—as befit the Holy of Holies.²⁰

A curtain (*parokhet* or “veil”; Leviticus 16: 2, 12: 15, 18: 7) hung at the Temple's entrance, woven from six-ply linen thread that resembled silk (BT *Yoma* 71b), in 72 squares, three fingers thick. It took 300 priests to carry it for washing, when it was draped over a portico for people to admire, its blue/purple/scarlet coloring subtly blended into an array of heavenly images, including Cherubim. It would seem that, since carved olive-wood Cherubim were no longer needed to hover above a Golden Ark of the Covenant that no longer existed, their memory was perpetuated in the two-dimensional form of tapestry. The impressive *parokhet* was suspended from gold clasps, hanging one cubit short of

18 André Parrot, *The Temple of Jerusalem* (New York: Philosophical Library), 1955: 92; also Wikipedia << GreatBuildings.com >>.

19 Kollek & Pearlman, *Jerusalem*, p. 105.

20 Helen Rosenau, *Visions of the Temple* (London: Oresko Books Ltd.), 1979: 20-21, 38.

reaching the ground.²¹ The post-biblical Letter of Aristeas²² confirms just how “impressive” was this “veil”:

The configuration of the veil was in respects very similar to the door furnishing, and most of all in view of continuous movement caused to the material by the undercurrent of the air. It was continuous because the undercurrent started from the bottom and the billowing extended to the rippling at the top—the phenomenon making a pleasant and unforgettable spectacle.

An air current evidently blew in through the cubit of space between *parokhet* and ground. This was purportedly the “veil” which was “rent asunder” at the time of the Crucifixion (*Matthew* 27: 51; *Mark* 15: 38; *Luke* 23: 45).

- 10) To complete this verbal painting of Herod’s Temple, here is what the Jewish historian Josephus (*Yosef ben Matityahu ha-Kohein*, 37 C.E.-100 C.E.) reported seeing from the area immediately in front of the building:

The facade was covered in gold all over and through its arch the first chamber could be seen from without, huge as it was... all glistening with gold and striking the beholder’s eye. The interior was divided into two chambers but only the first was visible, all the way up, as it rose 135 feet from the ground. Above the golden doors were carved golden grape-vines from which hung bunches each as big as a man... There were golden doors, half the height of the facade. When opened these revealed a curtain of [almost] the same length, embroidered Babylonian tapestry, a marvelous example of the craftsman’s art.²³

Oral versus Written Transmission of the Hebrew Bible

In ancient times the sacred lore of Judaism was handed down orally (my emphases, throughout).

I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren...and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall *speak* unto them all that I command him.²⁴

21 Based on a consensus of commentaries on the instruction given in Exodus 25: 26, concerning a similar curtain (or pair of curtains) that separated the *d’vir* from the *heikhal* in the Wilderness Sanctuary Tent (*mishkan*).

22 Op. Cit., v. 86.

23 Josephus, loc. Cit.

24 Deuteronomy 18:17-18.

The spoken word was supreme, as evidenced by the implied divine expectation of *auditory* compliance with Judaism’s proclamation of faith—“Listen, O Israel, the Lord our God is One!”²⁵

According to Scripture, God’s commandments were transmitted verbally.

At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of Tabernacles when all Israel is to come to appear before the Lord your God in the place that He shall choose, you shall *read* this Torah before all Israel in their *hearing*.²⁶

Furthermore, the oral lessons were to be passed from one generation to another via the auditory refinement of *music*.

Now therefore write this *song* and teach it to the Children of Israel; put it in their mouths...And Moses came and *spoke all the words of this song* in the ears of the people.²⁷

We know that this Pentateuchal injunction was carried out during the Second Temple era (514 B.C.E. — 70 C.E.) by Moses’ levitical descendants. We find corroboration in the Mishnah: “The Levites entered to *speak in song*”²⁸ before and after the sacrifice. According to the Book of Second Chronicles, however, the Levites had been commanded to “to sing *over* the sacrifice,”²⁹ i.e., simultaneous with the burnt offerings. It seems dubious that this arrangement could last very long, since it meant that the Levites’ First-Temple singing had to be powerful enough to override the sound of 128 cymbals (Ezra 2: 41, 3: 10) and 120 trumpets (II Chronicles 5:12), crashing and blasting while sacrifices were being offered. Sure enough, by Mishnaic times (beginning around 200 B.C.E.), things had quieted down considerably. Only plucked strings accompanied the singing—*in alternation with sacrifices*—and only a pair each of trumpets and cymbals remained, to signal priestly and levitic entrances and worshipers’ responses and genuflections before and after the singing (Mishnah *Arakhin* 2.3). The change from unison singing together *with* the sacrifice—to responsive singing *before and after* the Daily Offering—implies a softer, more lyrical musical background to the Second Temple’s worship rite, as I have discussed at length elsewhere.³⁰

25 Ibid, 6:4.

26 Ibid, 31: 10-11.

27 Ibid, verses 19, 44, 46.

28 Mishnah: *Tamid*, 5.6, *Eiruvin* 13.2, *Pesahim* 4.1.

29 *Metsudat David* on Second Chronicles 29:25.

30 Joseph A. Levine, *Synagogue Song in America* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc.), 2001: 4-7.

Throughout the millennium (960 B.C.E.-70 C.E.) that both Temples existed and grain-and-animal sacrifices were offered, the levitical choir accompanied itself on lyres and harp, joined by two flutes on twelve festal days during the year (BT *Arakhin* 10a...). The Levites' singing always took pride of place, even in Solomon's Temple where it had to compete with massive brass and percussion. Instrumental accompaniment—whether provided by the choir itself or by additional Levites on instruments alone—was without exception relegated to the status of accompaniment to the song.³¹

Open air versus “open” cave

By the late-8th century B.C.E., Solomon's Temple had showed alarming signs of weakening, as did the religious bonds of purity and morality that had held the populace together. Hezekiah, King of Judah, determined to strengthen both, cleansing Jerusalem of pagan worship and reorganizing the Temple personnel as well as its worship rite. He fortified the Temple gates and rebuilt the crumbled city walls (II Kings 18: 4; II Chronicles 29: 3-32: 3). He also sealed a cave outside the city walls, in which the Gihon Spring was located. He then had a 600-yard tunnel dug to conduct water from it into a newly built reservoir—called the Pool of Shiloam—within the western part of Jerusalem. This precautionary action denied the water-source to an invader, specifically, the Assyrian ruler Sennacherib.³² For our purposes, Hezekiah's most relevant accomplishment was his construction of a 500-cubit-square plateau of landfill around the old Temple, an accomplishment which later rabbinic authorities valued over anything that came afterwards, as archeologist Leen Ritmeyer observes:

It was still this first expanded Temple Mount to which Mishnah *Middot* (2.1) referred some nine centuries after the event, evidently ignoring King Herod's later, more extensive expansion, on grounds that his Edomite lineage effectively excluded any of his innovations from consideration as authentic measurements for future generations.³³

In the eighteenth year of Herod's reign (19 B.C.E.), that ambitious Edomite monarch began a colossal expansion and refurbishing of the Second Temple

31 II Chronicles 29:26; BT *Arakhin* 11a, JT *Pesahim* 30c.

32 II Kings 20: 20; II Chronicles 32: 30; Kolem & Pearlman, *Jerusalem*, op. Cit., p. 62; John Rogerson, *Chronicle of the Old Testament Kings* (New York: Thames & Hudson), 1999: 143.

33 Leen Ritmeyer, “The Pre-Herodian Temple Mount,” *The Temple and the Rock* (Harrowgate, England: Ritmeyer Archeological Design), 1996: 10; also Joshua M. Grintz, s.v., “Hezekiah,” *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1972, 8: 452.

along with Hezekiah’s Mount, both of which were proving inadequate to the task of handling the tremendous number of pilgrims and visitors that thronged to it on holy days. Renovation continued for 34 years after Herod’s death in 4 B.C.E.³⁴ In this newly refurbished Temple complex, the Levites stood upon a dais (*dukhan*) that was centrally located between the upper Courts of the Priests and Israelites and the lower Court of Women. This *dukhan* fronted the bronze Nicanor Gate (**Illustration 1** described earlier under **DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF HEROD’S TEMPLE AND MOUNT, n. 7**); The psalms (121-134) that Levites sang from these steps are each titled *Shir ha-ma’alot* (“A Song of Ascents”).



Illustration 1.—The bronze Nicanor Gate, *from Michael Avi-Yonah’s Scale Model of Jerusalem in the First Century of the Common Era (the gold doors and framing columns of Herod’s Temple can be seen as background).*

The idea of ritually “ascending” is consistent with the common Mideastern image of a temple as the place where one ascended to God, i.e., a consecrated

34 Kathleen Ritmeyer & Leen Ritmeyer, “Reconstructing Herod’s Temple Mount in Jerusalem,” *Biblical Archeology Review*, November/December 1989, pages 24-25.

place.³⁵ Such a site might include a ramp similar to the visionary “ladder” about which Jacob dreamed (Genesis 28: 12). This is the only time that Scripture uses the word *sulam*, which *B’reishit Rabba* equates with “Sinai” through a shared numerical value. The Midrash postulates: “It was the Divine purpose not to let Jacob pass the site of the future Temple without stopping;”³⁶ hence his decision to rest in the shade of a promontory³⁷ that reappears in his dream as a “ladder” which rose from earth to heaven—or from the mundane to the spiritual.

The levitical choir consisted of no less than 12 on weekdays and of many more on festivals. On those grander ritual occasions, minor children from the families of Jerusalem’s elite were added to achieve “sweetness” (*n’imah*).³⁸ The men accompanied themselves, mostly on stringed instruments; the children sang but did not play.³⁹ Normal instrumentation consisted of 9 lyres (*kinnorot*), 2 harps (*n’valim*) and 1 pair of cymbals (*m’tsiltayim*); on holy days 2 flutes (*halilim*) were added. All in all, it provided a lyrical accompaniment, since the cymbal—and occasional priestly trumpet—functioned only as punctuation between stages of the sacrificial ceremony, including the singing.

One might speculate that the Levites’ *dukhan* stood where it did for a good reason. The fifteen *ma’alot* upon which Levies were positioned as they sang were a realization of Jacob’s virtual “ladder”: their feet planted on earth, their head lifted toward the Heavenly Gates of the Temple. This analogy is supported by the Hebrew word for ladder—*sulam*—which also translates as musical “mode.” The numerical value of the letters that form *sulam* is the same as for those that make up the word *kol* or “voice.” This appears to be no coincidence. Verbal language here hints at the way musical language works—through vocal conduits by means of which the Levites’ song rose to celestial heights. The musical modes functioned as vehicles for quickening the devotional pulse of pilgrims attending the sacrificial rites, while transporting them from profane—to sacred—space and time. And the elevated *dukhan* upon which they stood, situated at the elevated nexus of three courtyards, evidently occupied the “sweet” acoustical spot of the entire Temple complex.

35 The writer’s notes from a lecture on *Parashat va-yetsei*, by Rabbi Andrea Morrow, weekly Torah Study Luncheon, Center City, Philadelphia, Dec. 8, 1998.

36 Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Bible* (New York: Simon & Schuster), 1966: 166.

37 JT *Avodah Zarah* I, 40a, referring to the promontory that rises south of Tyre (*Sulamah shel tsof*).

38 Mishnah *Arakhin* 3.3-6.

39 BT *Arakhin* 13a-b, based on Second Chronicles 29:25.

Levites served in the Temple choir from the age of 30 to 50,⁴⁰ their prime vocal years. They had evidently undergone 5 years of prior schooling under masters,⁴¹ since the Pentateuch mandates that Levites be “called to service in the Tabernacle at age 25.”⁴² When they reached 50 years, Levites no longer sang or played, but instead, served as watchmen.⁴³ The levitical choir was directed by an appointed leader, referred to as “the *m’natsei’ah*” in 55 of the 150 Psalms. Historian Alfred Sendrey elucidates:

M’natsei’ah is the singer chosen to lead the music or to officiate as precentor, who probably also instructed the choir, or at least supervised the rehearsals, and was a specially qualified artist with a superior musical knowledge. Furthermore, he must have been entrusted with the occasional solo passages in Psalm-singing. Thus, he may be considered the precursor of later days’ *hazzan* [cantor], the precentor of the synagogal sacred service.⁴⁴

The same choir that performed Psalms with instrumental accompaniment over burnt offerings outdoors also led scriptural excerpts and prayers *a cappella* in the semi-enclosed Chamber of Hewn Stone—*Lishkat ha-gazit*—that served as the Temple Mount’s synagogue.⁴⁵ The primary use of this Greek-style portico at the eastern terminus of the Temple complex’s double-tiered southern portico was as seat of the Great Sanhedrin (High Court of Justice). The portico’s central apse was set off by 40 imposing columns on either side.⁴⁶ Called “Solomon’s Portico” in the Christian Bible⁴⁷ and “Royal Portico” in Josephus,⁴⁸ it was walled along its outer (southern) side, but colonnaded along the entire front of its northern side, which opened onto the Court of Gentiles’ southern plaza.

After completing the daily prayer service in *Lishkat ha-gazit*, Priests and Levites had but a short stroll to the south side of the Temple’s raised platform. There, a stairway gave access to the Temple enclosure’s southern wall through whose four gates they and those offering sacrifices (together with approved

40 First Chronicles 23:3.

41 Ibid, 25:7.

42 Leviticus 8:36.

43 Ibid, verse 38.

44 Alfred Sendrey. *Music in Ancient Israel* (New York: Philosophical Library), 1969:115.

45 BT *Sukkah* 51a-b, Mishnah *Tamid* 4. 3.

46 Kathleen & Leen Ritmeyer, “Reconstructing...,” 1989: 32; Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XV:430.

47 Acts 3: 11.

48 Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 15:415.

guests) entered. Recent archeological excavations of the Second Temple Mount show that all four of its outer retaining walls were constructed like the Royal Portico wall that housed the Chamber of Hewn Stone, though not as high, with inner-facing colonnades along their full lengths.⁴⁹

The Royal portico's eastern end had a built-in apse, creating what we might term an "open" cave, a long interior room not entirely enclosed. The apse could easily have focused the sound produced by a Levitic choir while leading prayer. Instead of a general reverberation, the apse arguably produced "discrete reverberations distinguishable as echoes."⁵⁰ Under these conditions, the Levites, led by a *m'natsei'ah* just as they were led outdoors, cued a gathered congregation consisting essentially of Priests, in the Daily liturgy of excerpts from Scripture: Exodus 20; Numbers 6, 15; Deuteronomy 6, 11; and prayers: the Daily *Amidah* ("Eighteen Benedictions"); and *Emet v'yatsiv* ("True and Firm").⁵¹

The midday prayer service may have afforded Priests their only opportunity to escape what Israel Knohl calls a self-imposed "Sanctuary of Silence" that they inhabited when ministering in the Inner Court, around the Altar. There—at the epicenter of the sacrificial rite—they maintained total silence (see ACOUSTICS IN HEROD'S TEMPLE, below⁵²).

Speech versus Song

Whether in open air or open cave, the Levites had to reconcile two demands that are ever present in vocal music: comprehensible transmission of the words; and the establishment of a suitable musical mood. It was not a question of two equal forces at bay, in that time and place the contest was weighted in favor of the sacred texts. Music could not compete by simply marrying melodic and tonal beauty to linguistic imagery, as in secular song. Levitical song was totally dependent upon the Holy Writ that it was charged with transmitting: scriptural excerpts and prayers in the *Lishkat ha-gazit* service; Psalms during the sacrificial service. Just as instrumental playing was subservient to the sacred song that was interspersed with sacrifices, so too, the sung or chanted melodic pattern functioned only as a medium for delivery of an underlying textual message.

49 Kathleen & Leen Ritmeyer, "Reconstructing..." 1989:24-25; Leen Ritmeyer, *The Temple and the Rock*, 1996: 7.

50 Humphret & Vitebsky, *Sacred Architecture*, p.75.

51 Mishnah *Tamid* 5.1; BT *Sukkah* 53a; *Arakhin* 11a.

52 "The Letter of Aristeeas, : Op Cit., v. 92: "The ministering of the priests was absolutely unsurpassable in its vigor and the arrangement of its well-ordered silence."

A reasonable assumption as to what transpired musically at the apex of the three Temple courtyards accompanied by lyres, harps and occasional flutes, or in *Lishkat ha-gazit* unaccompanied, might come close to describing the melodically restrained and textually oriented linear formula of liturgical recitative.

The essential characteristic of liturgical recitative is the chanting of a text on a single note—the reciting tone—with upward or downward inflections to mark the ends of clauses or sentences. Thus any number of different [verses] may be sung to the same recitation formula.⁵³

In 1951, ethnomusicologist Johanna Spector visited several synagogues of Yemenite Jews who had been transplanted to Jerusalem two years before. She found that the worship, though traumatized by its sudden shift of venue, still remained true to its origins. By the time she returned six months later, an acculturation process had already begun, that would eventuate in thorough westernization of a Middle Eastern singing style that the Yemenite Jews had maintained through an exile of some 2400 years. Spector writes:

Of all Jewish music through the ages, Yemenite music is the least influenced by surrounding peoples and places... The Yemenites claim to have preserved the traditions of Temple times... As to the music, I marveled at the unusual rhythmic discipline of the entire congregation. It sounded almost like a trained choir... Most of the prayers, Psalms and songs were performed in chorus, everyone—children and adults alike—taking part.⁵⁴

The Yemenite liturgical performance that Johanna Spector heard on her first visit arguably came closer to the psalmody of the Second Temple's Levitical choir than any other source available to us—their community's founders had left the Judean homeland for Yemen during the Second Temple's heyday.⁵⁵ Musical change in that part of the world is quite gradual, occurring very slowly, if at all. As Abraham Zvi Idelsohn observed, geographic location is paramount in Semitic song. He cites the Finns and Turks as stemming from the same ethnic stock, yet their musical traditions pertain to their respective areas of settlement. In the case of Yemenite mass migration to Israel in 1949, "itinerants may learn other music, but they never forget their own."⁵⁶

53 Richard H. Hoppin. *Medieval Music* (New York: W. W. Norton), 1978:78.

54 Johanna Spector, "On the Trail of Oriental Jewish Music," *The Reconstructionist*, vol. XLIII, no. 5, April 1952, pages 7-12.

55 Hayyim Z'ev Hirschberg, *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1972), s.v. "Yemen," 16:739.

56 Abraham Zvi Idelsohn. *Tol'dot ha-n'ginah ha'ivrit* (Tel Aviv: Dvir), 1924:1-3; my translation.

Example 1. shows Idelsohn's 1924 transcription of a typical Yemenite chant-pattern, for Psalm 8.⁵⁷

La-m'natsei'ah al hag-gitit. Mizmor l'david

For the Leader; upon the Gittith.⁵⁸ A Psalm of David.

La - m'na- tsei-ah, al-hag-gi- tit._____ Miz' - mor l' - da - vid._____

Example 2. Idelsohn's transcription of a typical Yemenite chant-pattern, for Psalm 8.

The term “psalmody,” although originally associated with the Hebrew Book of Psalms, has come to mean the rendition of any prayer text in what we think was the ancient levitical manner, a linear chant designed to follow the parallelistic structure of all psalm verses, most biblical verses cited in prayer, and almost all the composed liturgy. Psalmic technique is thus a binary (sometimes ternary, depending on the text) recitative balanced by introductory and concluding flourishes in each segment. It is the driving force behind synagogue worship, which emerged as an organized communal activity during the final centuries of the Second Temple, and out of necessity became institutionalized after the Temple's destruction.

Earliest archeological evidence of synagogue structures per se existing anywhere in the Holy Land is from midway through the 1st century B.C.E.⁵⁹ Prior to then, already-existent gathering spots such as the open area fronting upon a city's gates made do as a synagogue (from the Greek *synagein* “to bring together”). There, prayers were offered at the exact times fixed for obligatory offerings at the Temple in Jerusalem.⁶⁰ Absence of structures built exclusively to house synagogues did not preclude the holding of worship in public areas throughout the Judean hinterland in pre-Christian times. The Mishnah⁶¹ is quite specific about the prayer service on prescribed fast days: where it was held (the town square); who led it (one whose house was full of children and devoid of sustenance); and what was recited (the Eighteen Daily Benedictions plus six supplementary ones from Psalms, First Kings and Jeremiah). As for regular morning and afternoon prayer gatherings in the outlying provinces,

57 Idelsohn, op. Cit., p. 235a.

58 Possibly a hand-held lyre perfected in Gat-Rimmon, one of the 3 levitical cities (Joshua 21:24, First Chronicles 6:54); John Stainer, *The Music of the Bible* (London: Novello, Ewer & Co.), 1881:66f.

59 Jericho; excavated in 1998 by Professor Ehud Netzer.

60 Mishnah *Ta'anit* 4.2.

61 *Tamid* 2.1-4.

Talmudist Solomon Zeitlin suggests that they duplicated all aspects of worship services held in Jerusalem, where nearly 400 synagogues thrived by the mid-1st century of this era.⁶²

Were the synagogues at that time—really “synagogues?”

Palestine in the 1st century C.E. contained a population of about 2.5 million, including 500,000 Samaritans, Greeks and Nabateans. Jews in the diaspora centers of Syria, Egypt, Babylonia and Asia Minor outnumbered their co-religionists in the homeland by 3 to 1, reports historian Salo W. Baron:

Every 10th Roman was a Jew... every 5th Hellenistic inhabitant of the eastern Mediterranean world was a Jew.⁶³

Despite vehement rabbinic discouragement of conversion during the later Amoraitic period,⁶⁴ at the inception of the Common Era, gentiles were adopting Judaism in large numbers, particularly women.⁶⁵ Many of the converts visited the Temple to which they had turned in their prayers,⁶⁶ so much so that local residents of Jerusalem—believed to have been 120,000—were far outnumbered by the pilgrims.⁶⁷ Josephus places the number of visitors at 3 million,⁶⁸ while the Talmud quadruples that estimate.⁶⁹

The Christian Bible corroborates the multicultural make-up of Jerusalem's population in the 1st century C.E., each subgroup with their own synagogues. The Book of Acts includes an arcane list of “Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven dwelling at Jerusalem.”⁷⁰ The Gospel of Luke elaborates in more familiar geographic terms: “and the dwellers in Mesopotamia...and Capadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and Libya, in Rome, Crete and Arabia.”⁷¹ Salo Baron claims a worldwide Jewish population of

62 BT *Ketubot* 105a; Solomon Zeitlin, “The Origin of the Synagogue,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 1931, page 78.

63 Salo W. Baron. *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. I (New York: Columbia University Press), 2nd edition, 1952:168-175.

64 JT *Kiddushin* IV, 1, 65b; BT *Yevamot* 24b.

65 Josephus, *Wars*, II:14, 3. 820; VI:20, 2. 560; Shaye D. Cohen, “Matrilineal and Patrilineal Descent in Historical Perspective,” *Sunday Scholar Series* lecture at Washington Hebrew Congregation, DC: October 27, 1991.

66 As Daniel (6:11) had done in Babylonia; Baron, *History*, 1952:213.

67 Avi-Yonah & Stern, “Herodian Period,” *E. J.*, 1972, 9:1394.

68 Josephus, *Wars*, II:14, 3. 280; VI:9, 3. 422-425.

69 BT *Pesahim* 64b.

70 Acts 2:5; 8-9.

71 Luke 2:9-11.

8 million at that time,⁷² citing the Roman Emperor Claudius' mid-1st century census of all his Jewish subjects.⁷³ If any significant part of that population went up to Jerusalem for the three Pilgrimage Festivals and High Holy Days, we must ask how the Temple managed to accommodate them all at once.

The Mishnah's reply is that special sacrificial services were repeated in their entirety as many times as proved necessary for successive groups that filled the Temple courtyards on grand occasions.⁷⁴ The Temple gates were opened for those great crowds from midnight on, each day of a festival.⁷⁵ This explanation seems plausible when we recall that a considerable number of non-Israelites—*yir'ei adonai* or God-fearers⁷⁶—were still being admitted at that more-welcoming time in rabbinic thinking—along with a constant stream of visiting gentile officials and dignitaries who—with their retinues—also brought Vow-and-Freewill offerings that, for political reasons, could not be refused.⁷⁷ In that category appeared such names as Demetrius I, Ptolemy III, Marcus Agrippa, Vitellius and Antiochus VII (in the midst of a siege he was conducting against the Holy City!).⁷⁸

Aside from the Festival and High Holy Day crowds, thousands more attended the Daily sacrificial service (*Korban ha-tamid*), particularly the Morning *Tamid* that ended at midday, in order to receive the Priestly Blessing⁷⁹ and to prostrate themselves before God when the Daily Psalm was chanted. A wine libation was poured over the Altar, trumpets sounded, a flag was waved, cymbals clashed and “the Levites raised their voices in song” to complete the Morning *Korban ha-tamid*.⁸⁰

Not all of those who desired to do so could afford the time and expenditure needed in order to attend the Jerusalem Temple's sacrificial service. To accommodate this silent majority in their home territories, gathering places known

72 Baron, *History* I, 1952:169-170.

73 Idem, based on Bar-Hebraeus, a 13th-century Christian Syrian of Jewish extraction.

74 Mishnah *P'sahim* 5. 5-7.

75 Safrai, “Ritual,” *E.J.*, 1972, 15:977-979.

76 Rashi, Ibn Ezra & M'tsuvat David on Psalms 135:20; *Anchor Bible, Psalms III, 101-150* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday), 1970, Mitchell Dahood, commentary on “Hallel” Psalms 115: 9-11, 118: 1-4. I am indebted to Rabbi Robert Scheinberg of the Jewish Theological Seminary for this insight.

77 Mishnah *Sh'kalim* 1.5, based on Leviticus 22:25; BT *P'sahim* 3b; Josephus: *Wars* 4;262; *Antiquities* 13;242; *Against Apion* 2:5, John 12:20.

78 Safrai, loc. cit.

79 Judith 9:1, Luke 1:10.

80 Mishnah *Tamid* 7.2, *ben Sirah* 50:2.

as synagogues sprang up throughout the 24 provinces of Judea. The Temple's ritual was democratized through an institution named *Anshei ma'amad* ("Standing Delegates"). Every province sent a delegation to Jerusalem twice yearly for a week of participation in Temple activities, by standing and carefully observing what went on and how it was done. Because the *Anshei ma'amad* were then expected to replicate back home what they had experienced in the Temple, and because sacrifices were not allowed anywhere else but in the Temple, it would be fair to assume that the delegates' vigil included the Daily prayer service as well; chanting was the only skill they could take with them.

Since not all appointed members of the delegation could make every journey, the ones who stayed home gathered in their local "synagogues" during the day they were supposed to be in the capitol. The composition of this group corresponded to that of the group in Jerusalem; the majority were Israelites, and if possible, at least one *kohein* and one *leivi* (priestly and levitic descendants) rounded out the quorum of ten adult men. Having learned the Temple's repertoire of chants from previous delegates and from their own observation over the years, these laymen recited the same Psalms and Bible readings—even the same *Birkat kohanim* (Priestly Blessing)—that were being offered at the same exact times fixed for the Daily Offering in Jerusalem.⁸¹ Talmudist Solomon Zeitlin suggests that the delegates who met in the outlying districts also duplicated all aspects of the payer service held in the Temple's synagogue, *Lishkat ha-gazit*.⁸²

One such outlying ancient synagogue—a full-blown stone edifice, judging by its excavated foundation, was unearthed in modern-day Israel in the town of Migdal near the Sea of Galilee. In its central chamber of 120 square meters ringed with stone benches, archeologists Dina Avshalom-Gorni and Arfan Najer of the Israel Antiquities Authority found a stone slab dating from 50 B.C.E.-100 C.E. It was decorated with reliefs of floral patterns, double-handled amphorae (earthenware vases) and a seven-branched Menorah like the one that stood against the southern inner-wall of the Temple's *heikhal* (Exodus 40: 24). It could quite easily be executed by a craftsman who'd seen the original, *in situ*.⁸³

81 Mishnah *Tamid* 7.2; BT *B'rakhot* 26b; Tosefta *B'rakhot* 3.1; Mishnah *Ta'anit* 4.2 (Bertinoro's commentary); Maimonides, *Mishneih Torah: Sefer Avodah* 6.2.

82 Solomon Zeitlin, "The Origin of the Synagogue," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 1931, p. 78.

83 Gil Ronen, "First-Ever Find: Temple Menorah Relief by Jewish Eyewitness," *Arutz Sheva* (IsraelNationalNews.com), September 11, 2009.

By the 1st century C.E., synagogues in one form or another had appeared throughout the Graeco-Roman world, states historian Rachel Wischnitzer:

The synagogue can be traced back to the first century of the Common Era in Europe, and farther back, to the third century B.C.E., in Egypt. Nothing has remained of these Egyptian synagogues except the inscriptions.⁸⁴

Nor has there been any archeological corroboration of synagogue-type “gathering-places” from this early period. Written evidence does exist, however. While shopping for Jewish converts to the new religion of Christianity, Paul visited the synagogue at Corinth (on the northeast shore of the Peloponnesian Peninsula) around the year 50 C.E. “In the account of Paul’s missionary journeys,” continues Wischnitzer, “we find references to several other synagogues on the European mainland: one in Athens (Acts 17: 17), and three in Macedonia, namely in Salonica (Thessalonica; Acts 17: 1), in Verroia (Beroea; Acts 17: 10) and in Philipi,” where Paul writes:

On the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together (Acts 16: 13).

Acoustics in Herod’s Temple

We can only guess at the architecture of early synagogues in the ancient Judean hinterland as well as of the other 399 in Jerusalem other than the one that used *Lishkat ha-gazit* within the Temple complex. It displayed an open-cave configuration: columns fronting a covered portico. Any speculation about the effect those conditions had upon the chanting of prayers and Psalms in the 1st century C.E. has to take into account the phenomenon that open air is sound absorbent. “Consequently,” notes Michael Forsyth,

the direct sound from a performer—perhaps reinforced by early-reflected sound from a wall around the stage—is not masked by reverberation, as it is in a hard-surfaced enclosure like a cathedral, a cavern, or a bathroom, where sound reflects off the enclosing surfaces for an appreciable period before being gradually absorbed.⁸⁵

We are pretty certain that, in the makeshift open-air or semi-open-air synagogues of Judea and the diaspora along the eastern shores of the Mediterranean at that time—including the Temple’s *Lishkat ha-gazit*, the need for crystal-clear audibility of chanted words made any desire for fullness of tone a merely secondary consideration.

84 Rachel Wischnitzer, *The Architecture of the European Synagogue* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America), 1964: 3-4.

85 Forsyth, *Buildings for Music*, 1985:9.

We also know from the written testimony of a 2nd-century B.C.E. eyewitness, that the daily sacrificial offerings of animals and grain in the Temple's Priestly Court were held amidst a complete absence of sound:

A general silence reigns, so that one might think that there was not a single man in the place although the number of ministers in attendance is more than seven hundred, in addition to a large number of the assistants bringing forward the animals for sacrifice. Everything is carried out with reverence and in a manner befitting supreme divinity... The spectacle makes one awe-struck and dumbfounded. A man would think he came out of this world and into another.⁸⁶

Aside from the absorptive nature of open-air surroundings, one other factor might have contributed to the Second Temple rite's pervasive silence. There is a differential between ground and air temperatures, especially in a warm climate like that of the Holy Land, and even more so at midday when the *Korban ha-tamid* was offered, and the mean temperature averages 82.5 degrees fahrenheit from late September to early October, when the Sukkot (Tabernacles) festival occurs.

I have singled out this specific season for a reason that will become apparent shortly. For the moment, with readers' kind indulgence, I offer an underlying acoustical explanation for the differential between ground and air temperatures:

The velocity of sound increases with increase in temperature. If the temperature of the air is higher near the ground than it is in the upper layers (the usual case during the day), the sound waves higher above the ground will travel slower and the sound will be bent upwards, resulting in quieter conditions at ground level. Conversely, when the temperature is lower near the ground (the usual case during the night), the sound will be bent towards the ground, increasing the noise at ground level.⁸⁷

Now to the consequences of that acoustical phenomenon in late summer/early autumn on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, especially at night, when the average temperature drops to 60.8 degrees fahrenheit.⁸⁸ The only Temple

86 "The Letter of Aristeas," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, James H. Charlesworth, ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday), 1985:19; 92, 95-96.

87 *Acoustics, Noise and Buildings*, P. H. Parkin, H. R. Humphries & J. R. Cowell, editors (London: Faber and Faber), 4th edition, 1979:130.

88 These seasonal temperatures—day and night—derive from averaging monthly tables in: *The Temple Dictionary of the Bible*, W. Ewing & J.E.H. Thomson, eds. (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.), 1910; and *Lonely Planet* (Google)—for a century ago and for now. Since there has been no discernible change in average temperatures over the past 100 years, my assumption is that they were pretty much the same when the Temple last stood.

ritual performed at night was a ceremonial “Rejoicing over the Water Drawing” held during Sukkot (the week-long Festival of Tabernacles). The Mishnah refers to the water-drawing itself—that occurred during daylight hours on the second day of the festival—as *Beit ha-sho’eivah*. The joyous (and noisy) “Rejoicing over the Water Drawing” that ensued after dark on the same day was called *Simhat beit ha-sho’eivah*. It was an event not to be missed, asserts the Mishnah:

He that has never witnessed *Simhat beit ha-sho’eivah*
has never in his life seen joy.⁸⁹

“The Sukkot festival was singled out for water pouring,” posits Haviva Pedaya, a poet and professor of Jewish Thought at Ben-Gurion University, because it was the turning of the year,⁹⁰ “the autumnal ingathering season when the quantity of water that would fill the cisterns and lakes of Judea was set. In a society that revolved around agriculture, water was the life-blood of existence, and the Jerusalem Temple functioned as its beating heart.”⁹¹

The daytime Water-Drawing involved bringing water from a source outside of the Temple precinct—the Spring of Gihon for which King Hezekiah had dug a pool and reservoir late in the 8th century B.C.E., called the Well of Shiloam (see OPEN AIR VS. “OPEN” CAVE, above). The ritual is described in the Mishnah:

They would fill a flagon with water from Shiloam. When they reached the Water Gate the shofar sounded three blasts: sustained—quavering—sustained [*t’kiah—t’ruah—t’kiah*]. The priest whose turn of duty it was would pour water over the altar from a silver vessel containing two holes. One was for wine and the other for water. The openings were arranged so that the two liquids would merge into a single stream that inundated the Altar’s four corners, cleansing the waste that had accumulated and penetrating the ground on which the Altar stood. A prayer was then offered for the water to gather and rise from earth to heaven, where it would fall again as rain upon the Land. During the prayer the priests made circuits of the Altar, accompanied by the Levites chanting Psalms 113-118 that spoke of Thanksgiving and Praise (*Hallel*), punctuated by the people’s ecstatic singing of the refrain, *Hoshana*.⁹²

The joyous *Simhat beit ha-sho’eivah* celebration that followed that same night was the Temple’s only liturgical occasion to allow dancing—by men—in the Women’s court. The men danced below while the women watched from

89 Mishnah *Sukkah* 5.1.

90 *Hag ha-asif, t’kufat ha-shanah*, Exodus 34:22.

91 Haviva Pedaya, “Written Word and Voice Emerge Together from the Ark,” *Yediot Aharonot*, Sukkot Supplement, October 13, 2006, my translation.

92 *Sukkah* 4.9.

above, in a special raised gallery (referred to as a *takkanah*—or “amendment”⁹³ since it override the normal separation of men and women within the Temple premise—built specifically for this occasion around the entire perimeter of the court. The scene was brightly lit by four towering golden candlesticks atop which rested four gigantic golden bowls, each filled with 10 gallons of oil in which floated numerous blazing wicks. The Mishnah notes:

there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that did not reflect the light of the *Beit ha-sho'eivah*.⁹⁴

The greatest sages of the day would dance before the assembled multitude with burning torches in their hands, singing songs and praises while the entire corps of Levites played on harps, lyres, cymbals, trumpets and “other musical instruments,” from the *dukhan* above and the fifteen steps leading down from the Courts of the Priests and Israelites to the Court of the Women, and—on this occasion—also from open-faced chambers built into the retaining wall that supported those upper courts of the Sanctuary area.⁹⁵

The dancing that night was spectacular. According to the Talmud’s account the head of the Sanhedrin, Shimon ben Gamliel, would throw eight burning torches in the air and juggle them so that they were all aloft at any given moment and no two of them ever touched. When he prostrated himself he would dig his two thumbs in the ground, bend down while still leaning on them, kiss the ground and leverage his body upwards without using his hands.⁹⁶ The din during this—and scores of similar gymnastic displays by leading rabbinic scholars—must have been terrific. Yet because the temperature near the ground at that time of year was over 20 degrees cooler than during daylight hours, the sounds of levitic playing (singing probably never entered the equation, given the prevalent celebratory noise level generated—on this occasion—by spectators as well as participants) bent toward the ground rather than dissipating upwards into the atmosphere, thereby reinforcing its volume and enabling it to override the general chaos.

During warmer daylight hours at any season of the year, the shriek of the *Magreifah*⁹⁷ signaled commencement of the Daily *Korban Tamid* service each morning and evening. The *Magreifah* was evidently a pneumatic noisemaker

93 Mishnah *Sukkah* 5.2.

94 Ibid., 5.3.

95 Ibid., 5.4;

96 Talmud Bavli, *Sukkah* 53a.

97 Mishnah *Tamid* 5.6. “One of the priests took the *Magreifah* and cast it on the ground between the Porch and the Altar (*bein ha-ulam v'lamizbe'ah*), and in Jerusalem none could hear his fellow’s voice by reason of the noise of the *Magreifah*.”

consisting of ten pipes, each of which contained ten holes. With no ceiling overhead to contain and reflect its high-pitched sound waves, the deafening sound it made to herald the priests' entrance in all likelihood sailed over the heads of those who stood in the Temple courtyards. Also, the air itself would have attenuated any frequencies above 1,000 Hz.⁹⁸ Paradoxically, outside the Temple's peculiarly quiet acoustic the deafening noise generated by the *Magreifah* could be heard as far way as Jericho.⁹⁹

Inside the Temple complex, whatever sound was not bent upwards by the difference in speeds between even normal winds at ground level and winds up top¹⁰⁰ would have been soaked up by the highly absorbent robes of hundreds of ministering priests and their assistants and by the thousands of worshipers and visitors who were in daily attendance. In addition, the vast open areas of the Temple courtyards would have precluded any "cue ball" effect of the Levites' singing and playing reflecting off solid side walls, as in an enclosed shoe-box shaped auditorium. The lack of lateral reflections from latticed-topped stone walls and long open colonnades probably resulted in an almost total absence of the reverberation that our modern ears have become accustomed to in concert halls. Hence the "general silence" reported by eyewitnesses.

Conclusion

Ironically, the Second Temple's acoustics during the final, most populous and fully attended century of its existence, lacked that "full-toned, blended sound, especially rich in the bass frequencies, where the individual notes are 'smoothed out' by the background reverberance... like the sustaining pedal on a piano."¹⁰¹ All that the masses of pilgrims huddled below the Levites in the Women's Court would have heard was the direct sonar emissions of adult and pre-adolescent male voices, plus plucked strings and occasional flutes. Those perched in the raised galleries surrounding the Women's Court, as well as the relatively privileged few admitted behind the Levites in the Priests' and Israelites' Courts, were less fortunate still. They received hardly any direct sound at all. Under such conditions our assumption must be that the clear tattoo of many syllables being chanted on a single note—the "recitation tone" of psalmody—assumed primacy of place.

Psalmodic technique engenders a sense of ebb and flow arising from the change of tone density as voices pass from multi-toned upward inflection

98 Parkin et al, *Acoustics*, 1979:130.

99 *The Mishnah*, Herbert Danby, ed. (Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 583, n. 1.

100 Parkin et al, *Acoustics*, 1979:130.

101 Forsyth, *Buildings*, 1985:217

onto a multi-syllabic reciting tone—and multi-toned downward inflection at the phrase ending. The level of tone density can thus move from one note per syllable to as many notes per syllable at the upward and downward inflections as breath will allow, particularly for more elaborate cadences. At a reasonable average tone density of ten notes per syllable, late Second Temple psalmody would therefore have been sung rather quickly, at an essentially *Allegro* tempo. To allow for rapid recitation, volume would naturally have moderated to a consistent *mp*. This quickened tempo and lowered volume would have worked well with string and occasional woodwind accompaniment,¹⁰² entirely in keeping with the muted acoustical ambience of Herod's grandiose Temple and the salient themes of Davidic Psalms: praise of the Creator; comfort for the sorrowing; and commendation of the righteous.

The over-all effect of such an elegantly performed liturgy, sung against the backdrop of a dazzling white and gold Sanctuary façade looking like “a snow-capped mountain”¹⁰³ must have been one of otherworldly serenity and well-being. A steady stream of syllables flowed impeccably over an *ostinato* of string figurations before cascading into a flourish of Middle Eastern vocal ornamentation. The pattern would have recurred with variations at every verse until the Psalm text ran out, a performance both calming and uplifting—because of its restraint—in a world full of violence and messianic expectations.¹⁰⁴

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102 Mishnah *Arakhin* 2.3.

103 Herod's Temple appeared to be built of white marble, yet that type of stone would not be imported into Palestine until after Jerusalem's destruction by the Romans in 70 C.E. Instead, the glistening whiteness was more probably applied to normally yellowish local stone by skilled craftsmen using a special plaster coating that was buffed to a high gloss that reflected sunlight like a mirror (archeologist Judith Magness in a PBS TV documentary, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, Camden, NJ: WNJS-23, Dec. 18, 2006).

104 Avi-Yonah & Stern, “Herodian Period,” *E. J.*, 1972, 9:1397.

Yofi u-k'dushah: The Role of the Aesthetic in the Realm of the Holy

By Diane Ruth Cover and Saul Philip Wachs

This article reflects an ongoing conversation between us. Saul's background is in music. While Diane is an artist and a calligrapher. The dialogue began one day on our honeymoon, while we were strolling down the *Tayelet* (boardwalk) in Tel Aviv one late afternoon. Saul wanted to daven Minḥah before the sun set, and so he looked around, trying to find an orientation in the direction of Jerusalem. Turning his back on the Mediterranean Sea as the sun began its long descent towards the horizon, he found himself facing—McDonalds! Diane bemusedly alternated her gaze between the magnificent scene playing out before her and Saul, who was intent on completing his davening before the time for Minḥah had passed. Afterwards, we engaged in a long and animated discussion about the trade-off between facing Jerusalem—a traditional value—and watching one of the great natural phenomena of nature as a backdrop to praising the Almighty.

That dialogue has continued over the years. We continue to discuss the nature of authentic Jewish spirituality and the role of contact with nature and beauty as a form of spirituality which has deep roots in the Hebrew Bible. During the summer of 2005, we spent several days in a farm house in Tuscany, one of the most beautiful places on earth, blessed with striking topography and generations-long reverential care for the land. Saul took advantage of the opportunity to daven outside each weekday, experiencing a heightened sense of *kavvanah* (devotional intensity)— particularly while preparing to pray—and later, when encountering the liturgical texts which speak of creation and God's gift of the natural world. We both agreed that experience brought home a way in which *yofi* can stimulate a sense of *k'dushah*.

Beauty

The aesthetic is a bridge which links the tangible world and transcendence. A beautiful landscape painting or ritual object can cause us to contemplate that which is beyond the tangible. Music and dance or the drama of ritual are capable of evoking thoughts and feelings that move us powerfully. A simple melody produced by the human voice or an instrument can cause the spirit to soar towards heaven, a recited poem can arouse emotion and feeling. Proportion and harmony or a balance of space, color and texture, all conspire to

create a particular mood. It may be joyous or tranquil. Brightness and light as well as vivid colors may cause us to feel celebratory, while a soft light and monochromatic colors could instill a thoughtful and contemplative mood.

Different feelings arise when space is delimited by round contours as opposed to sharp angles. Large and uncluttered spaces with high ceilings might inspire in us a sense of monumentality, grandeur and power while small and intimate spaces could induce a feeling of safety and warmth.

Sacred music ideally reflects the moods of liturgical texts that are sung to it. As a case in point, different musical settings of the Friday night prayer *V'shamru* ("The people Israel shall observe the Sabbath through all generations") might highlight its serene grandeur or our people's covenantal commitment to the Law, each of which is implied by this biblically derived prayer text (Exodus 31:16-17).

Poetry is next-best suited to express the life of the spirit. Like the visual arts, it can show us other ways of seeing and understanding the world. It may express our yearnings and desires. It may reflect that which is obvious or that which is unclear, enigmatic or hidden. Indeed, it provides us with a glimpse of insight which was not evident before but is now refracted in some new, dimly imagined way.

The artist, in a sense, prophesies, in that he or she discovers something new that others might not see or comprehend, and shares that revelation which reflects a new vision or potentialities. Moreover, posits John Dewey (1859-1952), through the creation and enjoyment of a work of art, the beholder is led to a refreshed and re-educated vision. Indeed, the aesthetic experience can engender and illuminate new insights which could enrich our lives and move us enough to conceivably change ourselves.¹

The arts, therefore, are catalysts which orient and illuminate. And it is our imagination which serves as the vehicle for our apprehension. Stimulated by the senses of hearing and sight, the imagination engages in synthesis, abstraction, invention, and integration, leading us to new awareness and understanding. Dewey says that our imagination allows us to adapt to the exigencies and vicissitudes of life and to accommodate to the whole, as we connect to one another in a shared experience²

Rudolph Otto (1869-1937) tells us that art in any form is the most effective way of presenting the numinous. Music, poetry and the visual arts convey

1 Cited in James Alfred Martin, Jr., *Beauty and Holiness: the Dialogue between Aesthetics and Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1990:113.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 116.

the mysterious and the numinous, while evoking awe and wonder along with Divine majesty.³

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (1903-1993) teaches that the role of the arts in the worship service is to encourage the congregant to actively participate in the devotional act of co-creation, to empathize with its pageantry through the experience of the poet, expressed by means of words and music. The goal is to unfold one's spirit, to actually transform oneself. The act of prayer, according to Rabbi Soloveitchik, is a creative attempt to fill the void of chaos with beautiful reality. During prayer, through imagination, one renews and recreates oneself.⁴ Moreover, God expects us to be creative—as God is creative. In sum, the act of prayer is a co-creative partnership with the Almighty, in which we feel the mystery of the cosmos. That, in turn, fosters within us halakhic sensibilities.⁵

Holiness

In Soloveitchik's view, beauty (*yofit*) accompanies creation in the process of bringing holiness (*k'dushah*) into the world. Only by coming in contact with the beautiful and exalted may one even hope to apprehend God. In fact, he says “the apprehension of beauty elevates the mind, cleanses the spirit, and, at least for a moment, elevates the heart.”⁶

Paradoxically, this encounter with the majesty of nature through prayer can produce two contrasting feelings. On the one hand, we are reminded of our smallness, our cosmic insignificance in contrast to the majesty of God. It is not an accident that, like chapter one of Genesis, the *b'rakhot* (blessings) that speak of creation— *Yotseir or* (“Creator of Light”), *Ha-ma'ariv aravim* (“Bringer of Evenings”), *Haz-zan et hak-kol* (“Who Nourishes All”)— are texts in which only God acts, we humans remain silent and passive observers who receive God's grace.⁷ On the other hand, viewing the beauty of nature through the prism of prayer can enhance one's sense of dignity for, as far as we know,

3 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

4 J.B. Soloveitchik, *Halakhic Man*, translated by Lawrence Kaplan (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society), 1983:106.

5 J.B. Soloveitchik, *Worship of the Heart*, Shalom Charney, ed. (Jersey City, NJ: KTAV Publishing House for Tora HoRav Foundation), 2003:55.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

7 See on this, Saul P. Wachs, “Some Reflections on Two Genres of *Berakhah*,” *Journal of Synagogue Music*, vol. xxii, nos. 1-2, July/December 1992.

only we human beings have both the capacity to appreciate aesthetics and a need to do so.⁸

Furthermore, Rabbi Soloveitchik elucidates, “man feels overcome by the impact of beauty. However, he is not crushed by it. On the contrary, he recovers a sense of worthiness and dignity.”

Humans express their joy and pride in being uniquely able to acknowledge beauty, through a *b'rakhah* recited in response to natural beauty: **ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם שככה לו בעולמו** (“Blessed are You our God, Sovereign of the Universe Who has [created] such things in Your world”).⁹ This *b'rakhah* acknowledges the poverty of language in trying to express the mystery and beauty of wonder. Others, too, have noted the same limitation of language. Elaine Scarry observes that beauty is breathtaking; it transfixes us, stops us in our tracks and makes the heart beat faster, virtually demanding a sense of reverence.¹⁰ Surely we have all reacted with a similar sense of wonder—even exaltation—to the experience of seeing a colorful rainbow, a sudden bolt of lightning or the snow-capped peak of a high mountain.

A Place of Worship

The *Mishkan* (Wilderness Tabernacle) was a work of splendor, gold and light; the detailed descriptions of which (Exodus chapters 35-38) reflect the love manifested by those involved and their passionate desire to build a fitting sanctuary to honor God and to house the Divine words. Indeed, they must have understood that music, color, stones, jewels, and gold play on our sensibilities and are indirect stimuli to moods of devotion and contrition which lead to the sublime.

The Divine message was that human beings are capable of creating beauty—with a spiritual purpose. The splendid *Mishkan* and the *Batei mikdash* (both Jerusalem Temples) were sign posts, evocative of the heavenly, which brought our ancestors closer to God. In referring to the synagogue as a *mikdash mat* (“Temple-in-miniature”), the Rabbis of the Talmud were teaching us that each

8 God’s awareness of this human capacity is reflected in Genesis 2:9.

9 The translation is by Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, in *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book of United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth*, Fourth Edition (London: Collins), 2006. *Siddur Sim Shalom* (Rabbi Jules Harlow, ed., New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 1985), translates the *b'rakhah*: “...Who has such beauty in His world.”

10 Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 1999.

synagogue has a potential to perform the same function.¹¹ Like its biblical antecedents, it can serve as a bridge between the mundane concrete world and the realm of the ineffable. Beautiful prayer spaces which glow with color and light, rich woods and fabrics play on our sensibilities and can inspire us to a greater awareness of the Divine. Since the ritual of the synagogue retains elements of worship in the *Mishkan* and *Batei mikdash*, this *Mikdash m'at* can express the same human yearning for closeness to God. The use of visual, verbal, and auditory vehicles are important media for reaching this goal, each helping us to express this yearning: The light of the *Neir Tamid* (Eternal Flame) and the brightness of the *Menorah* (seven-branched Candelabra)—direct links to the *Mishkan* and the *Batei mikdash*—strengthen our sense of lineage and remind us that we are links in the chain of Jewish continuity.¹²

The *Shofar* (ram's horn) sounding, the chanting and singing, the poetry and narrative of the prayers, the choreography and pageantry of Torah processions, all create moments of beauty when we sense the Divine. Visually, we adorn the *Sefer* (Torah scroll) with colorful fabric mantles, silver crowns and finials. We place it in the *Aron ha-kodesh* (Holy Ark), whose *parokhet* (Curtain) is often artistically embroidered. Moreover, the worshipper is moved by the pageantry of the Torah service, wherein the Torah is likened to a monarch, bejeweled and dressed in regal splendor. Indeed, this beauty can evoke feelings of closeness to God (it is significant that the liturgy recited when the Torah is taken from the *Aron ha-kodesh* and when it is returned, speak more of God than of the Torah itself).¹³

The aesthetic sense is stimulated through contact with the natural world, the sound and meaning of words, music, dance, drama, and visual arts. In worship, one experiences a sense of mystery, One senses the ineffable during these moments while in visual contact with an environment of mystery and

11 The term *mikdash m'at* originates in Ezekiel 11:16—where God refers to Himself as being a “diminished sanctuary” for His beleaguered people—but after the Second Temple's destruction was applied by the Rabbis to the synagogue; BT *Megillah* 29b;

12 *Sacred Realm: The Emergence of the Synagogue in the Ancient World*, Steven Fine, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press), 1996: 24ff. On the function of ritual in engendering and strengthening three kinds of roots, i.e., a sense of lineage, a sense of peerage, and a sense of linkage, see Joseph J. Schwab, “The Religiously Oriented School in the United States: A Memorandum on Policy,” *Conservative Judaism*, vol. viii, no. 3, Spring 1964:7-8.

13 Because the *Sefer torah* is the primary source of *k'dushah* in a synagogue, it is not surprising that it became the focus for artistic gifts of generations throughout history.

beauty. In such an environment one can feel a sense of community while singing together and yearning for the Divine. John Dewey claims that aesthetic and religious intensity can engender an experience of exquisite clarity and intelligibility which introduces us to a deeper reality of the world. It gives us feelings of belonging and takes us beyond ourselves, to find ourselves.¹⁴ When the worshipper emerges from the experience of worship more appreciative and reflective, with more awareness of others and concern for justice for all humankind, he or she feels morally uplifted.

And in so reaching God—writes Rabbi Soloveitchik—through prayer that is aesthetically inspiring, people can realize an ecstatic relationship with the Divine, that is unattainable through gestures limited to the merely cognitive and ethical.¹⁵ The worshiper, if he/she is truly committed, seeks to empathize with God through the imagery of the liturgical poet. The committed worshipper asks, “what are the implications of this text for my life right now, for my family and my community?” This can be daunting, as one may encounter strong feelings during the service.

Much of the dysfunctional behavior in contemporary synagogues masks an attempt to flee from engagement with the liturgy.¹⁶ In many cases this reluctance could well reflect a fear of the feelings that might emerge as a result of engagement with *k'dushah*. According to Moshe Halbertal, the single most important characteristic of *k'dushah* is that it cannot be manipulated.¹⁷ We cannot control it and that can be overwhelming and frightening.

Yet we are also drawn to this very engagement. We know that there is a dimension to reality beyond that which is tangible but we are pre-determined to view that dimension from the outside. **לֹא יִרְאוּנִי הָאָדָם וְחַי** (“No human may see me and live”). And even as we are frightened of it, we nevertheless yearn for contact with that which points to *k'dushah*¹⁸

14 Martin, p. 117.

15 J.B. Soloveichik, *Worship of the Heart*, p. 59.

16 Samuel Heilman, *Synagogue Life: A Study in Symbolic Interaction*, 1976. For a complementary approach, see Jeremy Schoenfield, *Undercurrents of Jewish Prayer* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization), 2007.

17 Moshe Halbertal, “*Al k'dushah u-g'vulot ha-yitsug ha-amanuti v'ha-l'shoni*,” *Borders of Sanctity in Art, Society and Jewish Thought*, Emily D. Bilski & Avigdor Shina, eds. (Jerusalem: Keren Edy), 2003.

18 The classic work on this is Rudolph Otto, *The Holy—On the Irrational in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational* (first published in German, 1917). Otto uses the encounter of Moses with God at the burning bush (Exodus chapter 3) as paradigmatic of this ambivalence. Another example is found in the behavior of the

Modernity has brought with it its own distinctive challenges to spirituality. If they engage at all, moderns are limited in their ability to do so imaginatively. The scientific spirit of the age and the emphasis on critical and literal inquiry rather than metaphorical reading create barriers to the celebration and contemplation of the sublime and the mysterious. The latter represent the very essence of an artistically realized religious experience.¹⁹

Literalness is the chief enemy of the religious spirit. Poetry shows us other ways of seeing and understanding a world in which the human spirit may live.²⁰ Any of the arts—when integrated through our imagination—can evoke a grander vision than the literal understanding of cognition alone might provide.

A “Surrogate of the Congregation in Prayer”

The challenge that every *sh’liah tsibbur* faces is to help worshipers overcome their fear of drawing nearer to the Divine. Instead, anyone who has been delegated by the community to lead public prayer must do all within their power to enable congregants to enter the realm of the holy. In this task, the *hazzan* (Cantor)²¹ is called upon to become a musical artist whose palette consists of Judaism’s multi-colored prayer modes and whose brush is loaded with words of the received liturgy.

It is noteworthy that, while the Torah places an absolute ban upon any effort to depict God visually (a ban which was not accepted by Christianity but is accepted by Islam,) it does not limit our ability to “visualize” God in words. The artist, poet or musician brings to light what others cannot see and may be led to see through the aesthetic experience. Through envisioning what has never been seen before, the artist creates anew. In religious terms, the artist is not only priest but also prophet, says Alfred Whitehead.²²

The artist of vocalized language can bring words to life, through musical interpretation. That is a core mission of a *hazzan*, who reveals new understandings of the liturgical text. The music of the synagogue is logogenic; its words

Israelites at Mount Sinai (compare Exodus 20:12-13 and 21:16).

19 Rudolph Otto, cited in Martin, p. 73.

20 George Santayana, cited in Martin, p. 107

21 Hyman I. Sky, *The Development of the Office of Hazzan through the Talmudic Period*, unpublished dissertation (Philadelphia: The Dropsie University), 1977, Preface, vii: “The ubiquitous *hazzan* [synagogue supervisor] assumed the function of the *sh’liah tsibbur* so as to deal with a ‘canonized’ liturgy, after the close of the Talmudic period but before the beginning of the 7th century.”

22 Martin, p. 121.

are central. Abraham Joshua Heschel taught that a hazzan who is worthy of his/her calling shows respect for the dignity of words. If the prayer chant is effective in tone-painting its underlying words, two things result: there is an experience of beauty; and the building of a bridge to the transcendent. And here is where the challenge lies, because we live in a world where words are often debased. To defend against this vulgarization, we have developed a kind of semantic aphasia: we tune out most commercial announcements; so much so that we may forget to tune back in when hearing or uttering words of prayer.

Somehow, a hazzan must lead the congregation in such an artful and arresting way that they break through this semantic aphasia. Only then can the assemblage then collectively begin to engage with the liturgy. Making that connection will require *kavvanah*—focus, intention and sincerity—on the part of every participant.

Indeed, for the aesthetic to play any role in the realm of the holy, awareness and perception are required. To behold the transcendent once the aesthetic element has played its part, we need to recapture the openness of early childhood. Very young children still retain the wide-eyed innocence to see and respond to the world around them. They sense its wonder and majesty, before they are trained not to perceive its wholeness: its beauty and holiness all wrapped together.

To compensate for our loss of youthful innocence, we adults have been given a liturgy that links *yofi* and *k'dushah*. Performance is the key. Facilitated by a gifted, knowledgeable and committed *sh'liah tsibbur*, prayer acts as a bridge between the mundane and the eternal. The element of *yofi* enters through the visual adornment of prayer spaces, the sacred music and the inspiring rendition of liturgy. Experiencing aesthetic beauty leads to an otherworldly uplift of spirit, a feeling of contact with *k'dushah*, that imparts a deeper meaning to our lives.

Aided by all of the above, worshippers are primed to engage in a creative act which is characterized by struggle. They must first grapple with the medieval Hebrew poetry whose words fill the pages of our prayer books (English translations, typically bland and banal, will not do it). The sincere 'pray-er' needs help, which the hazzan is uniquely equipped to provide. Charged with the task of bringing often obscure written language to life, the hazzan will do whatever is necessary in order to make worshipers aware of nuanced meanings woven into the biblically inspired poetic words. When this is done artistically, yet in a way which remains faithful to the text, it allows the congregant to make connections and to explore possible implications for personal, familial and communal life.

Music is uniquely endowed with the capacity to link beauty and holiness. According to Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972), “music, is the only language which seems to be compatible with the wonder and mystery of being.”²³ When one listens to enduring liturgical music, one’s soul is lifted to realms of existence which it could not attain through the power of the intellect alone.²⁴

Marshaling music, art and poetry in the creation of beauty—to facilitate entry into the realm of the holy—is a worthy and significant task. The privilege of participating in this task is given to each of us who have accepted the role of *sh’liah tsibbur*. Granted, the creation of *yofi* cannot be seen as the ultimate value in Judaism. But it can serve as a portal to *k’dushah*, opening our minds and hearts to an awareness of the numinous.

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23 Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Insecurity of Freedom* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Geroux), 1966: 245.

24 Avraham Holtz, “Religion and the Arts in the Theology of Abraham Joshua Heschel,” *Conservative Judaism*, vol. xxvii, no. 1, Winter 1978:34.

Arranging Two-Dimensional Space for Liturgical Use— Typography in a Bi-lingual Siddur

By Simon Prais

Typography concerns both choice of font (or design of a new one), and use of the chosen font/s. This pertains to size, layout and formatting. Both ‘choice’ and ‘use’ each have two key factors requiring careful balance, style and legibility. In the case of a bi-lingual siddur both these aspects are of paramount importance. The prayer book’s very nature of indicates that its target audience are those for whom Hebrew is not their first language and so, legibility of the Hebrew font and its layout is vital. Of comparable importance is design, style of the font and also the visual appearance of the layout.

It can be challenging to move forward from what we accept as ‘traditional.’ However, with the objective of improving legibility and the ability to pray accurately from a siddur, the basis of such changes can be both historically and rationally justified. Comparison of early Hebrew lettering to that which we consider a traditional Hebrew font illustrates how technology and the secular world influenced the Hebrew fonts of the 18th century, resulting in a loss of legibility and heritage.

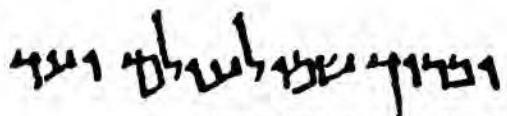
A siddur helps us to perform the mitzvah of prayer. Beautifying the mitzvah through good design is a mitzvah in itself, encouraging regular and accurate use. Unlike a novel or a newspaper, both of which would normally be read just once, a siddur is somewhat unique. The texts are repeated on a daily and weekly basis, and are poetic in content, which should be taken into account when considering the suitability of font and layout design.

In order to appreciate the complexities of the subject, it is necessary to first understand the origin of the written Hebrew letter and that of its subsequent printed form.

Background to the written and printed Hebrew letter

Comparison of the written Hebrew letter—both earliest examples and later developments—shows contrasting differences to that which is popularly accepted as traditional (Figure 1-E).

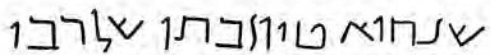
1-A An early example of the written Hebrew letter from the Dead Sea Scrolls circa 1st century BCE.



וּמִיּוֹן שֶׁנֶּלְשָׁם וְעַד

A) Dead Sea Scrolls (circa 1st c. BCE)

1-B An early example of Hebrew inscribed in a coffin lid¹ at Beit She'arim circa 3rd c. BCE.



שְׁחָוָא טוֹן וְכַתָּן אֶלְרָבּוּ

B) Beit She'arim Inscription (circa 3rd c. CE)

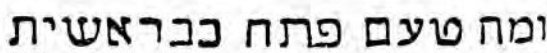
1-C The Aleppo Codex, written in the 10th century, the Masoretic period, which saw attention to detail and accuracy of the written word.



טָּ דָּאָף הַגְּדוֹל חֲזוּמָם

C) Aleppo Codex (10th c. CE)

1-D One of the earliest examples of printed Hebrew², printed in Reggio di Calabria.



וּמָה טַעַם פֶּתַח כְּבִרְאִשִׁית

D) Early Hebrew type, printed in Reggio di Calabria (1475)

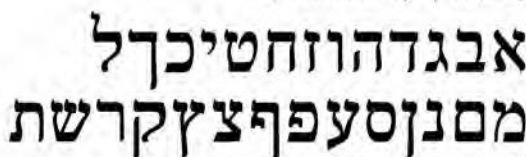
1-E A 'traditional' Hebrew font in the style used from 1825 by the Romm Family Press in Vilna. This example is from a current edition of the siddur 'Tefilat Kol Peh' published by Eshcol, Jerusalem.



אֲבַגְדָּהּ זֹחַ טִי כָךְ לֵ
מִסְנֵן סַעֲפָּף צִיָּן קִרְשֵׁת

E) Vilna Romm Style (19th c. CE)

1-F Frank Rühl typeface 1908, a key early step in the 20th century's reforms in Hebrew typography.



אֲבַגְדָּהּ זֹחַ טִי כָךְ לֵ
מִסְנֵן סַעֲפָּף צִיָּן קִרְשֵׁת

F) Frank Rühl, Rafael Frank, Germany (1908)

Figure 1. Typefaces A - F

A factor contributing to the acceptance of this style (figure 1-E) as being 'traditional' was its use by the Romm family to print the Vilna Talmud from 1825, through to its continued use to date. Font designers of the 20th century set out to improve on the many flaws of this style; the first of note

1 Ada Yardeni, *The Book of Hebrew Scripts*, Carta 1997.

2 Rafael Frank, *German Printing Trade Archives*, Vol. 48 issue 11, (German), 1911.

being Rafael Frank, who designed the Frank Rühl font in 1908 (figure 1-F). In his essay printed in the German Printing Trade Archives (Vol. 48, issue 11) of 1911, Frank describes the earliest Hebrew fonts (prior to influences resulting in the ‘traditional’ style) as follows:

This type—set without vowels [figure 1-D]—is acute-angled in shape and, even at this early date, the letters were rectangular at a ratio of 3:4, the shape I was to demand for the Frank-Rühl typeface [figure 1-F]. And these characters do not bear the slightest trace of the stark differentiation between horizontal thickness and vertical thinness that later became a feature of Hebrew type and has lasted until our day [figure 1-E].

In comparison to earlier written Hebrew letter styles (figures 1-A/C), there are four noticeable differences in the ‘traditional’ style:

- Contrast of vertical to horizontal strokes.
- Horizontal to vertical letter ratio.
- Angled to horizontal base strokes.
- Similarity of letters and recurring shapes within letters.

Contrast of vertical to horizontal strokes

The traditional Hebrew font exhibits the extreme of a style applied to Latin typefaces of the early 19th century; a style pioneered by the likes of John Baskerville (Birmingham, UK in 1757) and which reached extremes through Didot and Bodoni in the early 1800s. This resulted in an accentuation of the difference in the thickness of horizontal to vertical strokes. Parallels to the traditional Hebrew style are also drawn with that of the Gothic Blackletter which was popular in Germany through to the mid-20th century. Ittai Tamari writes.³

The letter cutters relied on handwritten manuscripts as models that were not always of an embellished ‘square’ and corrected script; this resulted in the printing of distortions and errors. The most obvious of these was the emphasis of the thick horizontal strokes, characteristically produced by a flexible quill but which could have been, more or less, regularised and minimized by the font cutter’s tool. Gothic characteristics were thus fixated in a letter that in fact had nothing in common with the Gothic tradition.

3 Ittai Tamari, Chair for Jewish History and Culture, Department of History, Munich University, “*New Hebrew Letter Type*,” *Tel Aviv University Exhibition Catalogue*, 1985.

Unlike the Latin letter that benefits from a slightly heavier vertical stroke, it is the horizontal strokes of the Hebrew letter that were exaggerated in thickness. However, there are a number of fundamental problems in applying such a style to Hebrew typography.



Figure 2 compares a Latin letter 'M' to the Hebrew letter 'Final Mem'. They are both of identical outer dimensions, other than the Hebrew letter actually benefiting in height from the top of the letter rising above that of the Latin letter. However, even with the additional physical height of the Hebrew letter, the Latin letter appears to be taller. An optical illusion, but when applied to the design of a Latin font, the printed word benefits from looking taller, whereas the Hebrew letter style looks shorter.⁴

Figure 2

A further aspect of applying extreme contrast differences to the Latin and Hebrew letters is that of legibility. If the thinner horizontal strokes of the Latin alphabet are totally removed, the letters still retain a level of individual recognition, whereas this is far less when the thinner vertical strokes are removed from the Hebrew alphabet. Every stroke of the Hebrew alphabet is required to avoid uncertainty of the letters. The importance of seeing the entire shape of each Hebrew letter compared to that of the Latin alphabet was researched by Joseph Shimron and David Navon at the University of Haifa.⁵ The experiment highlighted that covering the top part of each letter in the Latin alphabet did not hinder reading speed as significantly as when applied to the Hebrew letter.

Incidentally, fonts with a slightly heavier vertical than horizontal stroke are used in Israel for signage. This results in the letters looking taller than if the traditional form of heavier horizontals were applied (Figure 3).



Figure 3

4 Simon Prais, *Design Considerations affecting the simultaneous use of Latin and Hebrew Typography*, 1984. www.HebrewTypography.me.uk

5 Joseph Shimron & David Navon, "The Distribution of Visual Information in the Vertical Dimension of Roman and Hebrew Letters," *Visible Language* Vol. 14, No. 1. 1980.

Horizontal to vertical letter ratio

The square ratio of the traditional Hebrew letter uses more space than a narrower 3:4 ratio letter. Although more compact, a correctly designed letter can actually result in improved differentiation between similar letter pairs, such as the overhang on a *Bet/Daled* to distinguish from a *Kaf/Resh* comprising a larger proportion of the letter's width. A 3:4 ratio letter also results in more words to the line, thus saving space that can be applied to an increase in font size.

Angled to horizontal base strokes

A uniform horizontal base stroke, a characteristic of the traditional Hebrew typeface and a continued practice in many current day fonts, greatly reduces legibility. It is clearly an influence of the Latin letter sitting on a baseline and the format of metal typesetting machines.

As illustrated by the letter samples (Figures 1-A/C), and the traditional laws for writing a *Torah*, Hebrew letters hang down from a scored line and have a sloping baseline. However, the majority of Hebrew fonts currently in use today are designed to sit flat on a baseline; incorrectly, in my opinion.

The Hebrew letters have far less components than the Latin letters, and a uniform horizontal base line in a high proportion of the letters reduces the speed with which one can interpret them. Although a horizontal baseline would have been practical for the setting of Hebrew with vowels in metal type, photosetting technology from the 1960s and more recent computer setting can easily accommodate setting vowels under letters which have a sloping base.

Similarity of letters and recurring shapes within letters

The traditional Hebrew font style lacks accentuation of the differences in comparable letter pairs; *Nun* to *Gimel*, *Bet* to *Kaf*, *Heh* to *Het* and *Samekh* to *Final Mem*.

Also of note is the letter *Lamed* in which, although not necessarily reducing legibility, but not following historic form, the prominence of its ascending stroke is reduced in the printed letter and the lower part of the letter accentuated. This trait is frequently exacerbated by bending of the top of the *Lamed* as shown in figure 1-E. The advantage of such a practice is that less space is required between lines of text without the *Lamed* clashing with the hanging strokes of final letters or vowelization; however, it is not in keeping with the letter's original characteristics.

Koren — Tanakh font 1958; Book font 1978

(*Koren Bi-lingual Siddur* 2009)



Figure 4

The original font, *Koren Tanakh* (Figure 4-C), was designed by Eliahu Koren in 1958 for printing the *Koren Tanakh*. This was the first Bible to be printed and published entirely by Jews in nearly 500 years.⁶ Having studied graphics and stained glass in Germany, Koren arrived in Jerusalem in 1933. His early work included running the graphics department of the KKL (Jewish National Fund). He won a competition to design the emblem for the city of Jerusalem and his work (*The Lion and Olive Branches*) is used to this day. Koren originally embarked on the design of the *Koren Tanakh* font for printing a Tanakh to be published by the Hebrew University. However, after their decision to change the production process to use an existing font rather than proceed with the manufacture of the *Koren* font, the University's publication was found to be inaccurate and subsequently unsuccessful. This resulted in Koren publishing his own accurate Tanakh—the official Tanakh of Jerusalem and the Knesset.

Koren provides us with references to the inspiration, objectives and science behind the creation of his font.⁷

A) Printing was invented in the middle of the fifteenth century. The inventor, Johannes Gutenberg, printed the first Bible in non-Hebrew letters. This Bible is well known not only for being the first one but also because it is considered to be the most beautifully printed Bible. What letter did Gutenberg choose for his book? No doubt he looked among the written letters, searching for the most beautiful ones, in order to cut the letters for his printing similar to them. I followed the same path. Since I, like

6 Dr. Leila Avrin, *Yedidei Ha'sefer* No 6, *Israel Bibliophiles* (Hebrew/English), 1986.

7 Eliahu Koren, *The Idea and the Realisation* (Hebrew), 1991.

any other person, cannot decide by my own judgment which is the most beautiful Hebrew letter and the most correct one, I checked the first printed documents ever made. In this way I made the skeleton for the Hebrew alphabet. Every letter needed adaptation, since the easier it is for the eye to take in a letter, the quicker the brain is to understand it, exactly as the spoken word, when it is uttered with the right tone and strength, comes better through the ear to the brain.

- B) Although I am not keen on using abbreviations in order to explain the Torah, I was happy when I found a nice explanation that would strengthen my approach to the work I was facing. In the book of Vayikra, Chapter 17, Verse 11, it is written: For the life is in the blood. I explain the word 'hadam' (the blood) thusly: 'he' - hidur (giving beauty); 'daled' - diuk (precision); and 'mem' - massoret (tradition). Those three characteristics - tradition, precision and beauty - became the basis of my work. They are the life-blood of a perfect work.
- C) ...While reading (the font) they filmed the retina of the reader. The more the retina of the eye was closed it indicated that the eye was making more of an effort. Comparably, the more open the retina indicated reading was easy and comfortable... The final results were that the greater the difference between the letter shapes, the easier the eye interprets them.

The *Koren Tanakh* font was completed in 1958 after the initial matrices for casting the letters had been rejected by Koren for varying by one three-hundredth of a millimeter from his original drawings (the manufacturer's specified tolerance being up to two-hundredths of a mm). The letters were drawn 10x the size of the cast letters, which in turn were 50% larger than their final usage in the largest format of printed Tanakh (the size in a standard size Tanakh or Siddur being a further 50% smaller).

In addition to maintaining a reasonable difference in vertical to horizontal line weights, as introduced in the *Frank Rühl* typeface, and a similar 3:4 shape ratio, Koren's objectives are clearly achieved (Figure 4-B/C).

A greater differential in letter shapes is evident through the use of angled horizontal strokes. The angled heads (rhomboid shapes) of the *Koren Tanakh* font accommodate the placement of the *Holem* vowel and that of the *Shin/Sin* dot (Figure 5). Unlike the *Lamed* letter style of *Frank Rühl* and *traditional* style fonts, the foot of the *Lamed* in *Koren* is tapered and greater prominence and height given to the ascending vertical stroke. In discussions with Eliahu Koren (1984) he was very particular that the upper stroke of the *Lamed* is prominent and not bent as had become customary in *traditional* fonts.



Figure 5

Remaining true to his objectives of tradition, precision and beauty, the *Koren* letter maintains the characteristics of the *traditional* Hebrew letter, whilst benefitting from the *beauty* of well-drafted and balanced forms with an unprecedented degree of *precision*. This is achieved not only in the unique shapes of the letters and combinations accommodating all vowels and ta'amim in a legible form, but also in the production to a precision within two-hundredths of a millimeter.

Figure 6 compares the letters *Final Mem* and *Samekh* of the traditional *Vilna* (right) to that of *Frank Rühl* (centre) and *Koren* (left). The *Vilna Samekh* and *Final Mem* are differentiated only by the angle of the lower right corner while the upper three-quarters of the letters and the central space remain almost identical. The difference is increased in *Frank Rühl* by the rounding of the lower part of the letter which is also echoed in the central space, but the upper half of the letters remain similar. *Koren* substantially changes the dynamics of the letters, altering both the external proportions and the internal space.

Although the external shape of the *Koren Final Mem* does not differ much from the other font styles, *Koren* introduces an important characteristic to the central space. The shape of the space tapers in slightly, like a hanging water droplet, whereas the other fonts exhibit the opposite effect. In this the *Koren* font is true to the original structure of the Hebrew letter, hanging from the line.

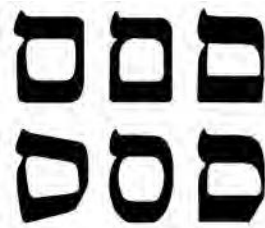


Figure 6

Having produced the *Koren Tanakh* font (for cast metal typesetting) in 1958, a number of other publications including a bi-lingual *Haggadah* (1965) were produced in this typeface. However, *Koren* ideally wanted to reserve use of this font exclusively for the *Tanakh* and he set about designing a variant of the typeface, *Koren Book* (Figure 4-D), which would be used for the *Koren Siddur* (Hebrew-only edition, first published 1982). This font was made available on the AM Verityper phototypesetting system in 1978 for *Koren Publishing*.⁸

It must have been a struggle for *Koren* to create a second font—the *Koren Book* font—after achieving his ultimate goal with *Koren Tanakh*. However, in comparing the two fonts it is clear where his inspiration originated—the script of the *Aleppo Codex*. *Koren* explains⁹ how after designing the *Koren*

8 Yossi Pinchas of Pal-Ron, Jerusalem (Verityper distributor). Recollection of date based on the invention of Verityper photosetting in 1976 and first equipment becoming available in Israel by 1977, after which the bespoke *Koren* font will have been introduced.

9 Eliahu *Koren*, *The Idea and the Realisation* (Hebrew), 1991.

Tanakh font he had the opportunity to see the Aleppo Codex and was pleased that its script resembled his *Koren Tanakh* font. However, although he fails to say that he subsequently used it as a model for the *Koren Book* font, there are a number of key similarities in the character changes made to the *Tanakh* font to form this second font. Figure 4-A shows a small detail from the *Aleppo Codex* script. Of particular interest is the diamond/lozenge shape forming the tops of the letters *Gimmel* and *Zayin* and other letters in which this component appears, such as the left arm of the letter *Tet*. This provides one of the differentiating features of the *Koren Book* font. Also, the sloping bases of the *Tet* and *Tsadi*, and increased weight given to the top of the *Lamed*. These differences contribute to a further diversification from the repetitive forms of the *traditional* style, whilst still maintaining the general feel of the *traditional* letter.

The 1982 Siddur comprised of Biblical texts reproduced directly from the original *Tanakh* artwork of the cast metal *Koren Tanakh* font, combined with the remaining sections typeset in the *Koren Book* font through the AM Verityper phototypesetting system. These fonts had a different weight for the vowels associated with them. The *Tanakh* font has heavier vowels, requiring them to be set a further distance from the letters than those of the Siddur font. This distinguished the *Tanakh* typeface vowels from the lighter weight trope signs (*t'amim*) required. As the addition of notes was not a requirement for the *Koren Book* typeface, the vowels could be lighter in weight and subsequently set closer to the letters. When the fonts were re-drawn for digital typesetting of the bi-lingual Siddur of 2009 a single set of vowels, based on the weight of the *Tanakh* font, was applied to both typefaces. This provides improved consistency across the two typefaces. A further modification is an alternative *Lamed*, not with a bent top which *Koren* would never even have considered, but the same shape *Lamed* with an almost indistinguishably shorter head. This is used in combinations where the top will otherwise collide with a note or descender from the line of text above. This can be identified in instances of consecutive letter *Lamed*, where only one is in the shorter form.

The continued resemblance to the *traditional* style by maintaining a significant difference in thickness between the vertical to horizontal strokes has its shortcomings. In small sizes, photographically reduced, the thin vertical strokes become too thin, thereby reducing legibility. This was something *Koren* was aware of and for textual notes within the *Koren Siddur* of 1982 the *Hadassah* font is used for references in the margin. *Hadassah* benefits from having a more uniform stroke thickness. The *Koren Hagadah*, printed earlier on in 1965, also used the *Hadassah* typeface for the small point size references.

The Koren fonts were specifically designed for religious purposes. The *Koren Tanakh* artwork was directly lifted to provide the biblical text components of the 1982 *Siddur*, on which the 2009 *Siddur* is based. It is said that during the preparation of the *Tanakh*, Koren would collect the artwork from his artist (many worked from home) every Friday afternoon, to ensure no work was done on Shabbat.

The Koren Siddur

Considerations of a Siddur layout are complex, even when just in Hebrew. In addition to distinguishing between instructions and text, there is the need to accommodate texts which are only included on special occasions. Ironically, such texts which are not said regularly, are frequently set in a smaller size with other techniques to separate them; subsequently the less familiar prayers are even less legible.

Adding a second language increases the challenge. Should the Hebrew be set on the right-hand pages with English to the left, or should it be the reverse? Or should both be on the same page and, if so, in which order? Also, should the text be aligned to the left or right? This provides numerous variations and most have been used for the publication of *siddurim*.

The purpose of a bi-lingual Siddur:

- To pray accurately in Hebrew.
- To provide guidance (rubrics).
- To offer easy access to the translation (when required).

To achieve this, many points including the following require consideration:

- Hebrew/English; left/right; single/double pages
- Referencing Hebrew to English
- Initial letters/words
- Alternative and occasional texts, words and paragraphs.

The most apparent variable when opening a bi-lingual Siddur is the juxtaposition of Hebrew to its translation. Traditionally, the most common format, as used in both the *Authorised Daily Prayer Book*¹⁰ and the *ArtScroll Siddur*,¹¹ is to set the Hebrew on the right-hand leaf and its translation on the left-hand one. The logic is that Hebrew starts at the right and English at the

10 United Synagogue, *The Authorised Daily Prayer book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth*, First published 1890.

11 Mesorah Publications Ltd. *The Complete ArtScroll Siddur*, First published 1984.

left, so when looking at a double-page spread it is natural to look to the right to find the start of the Hebrew. However, such a format does have its failings.

Figure 7 presents a double-page spread of *Ashrei* in the *ArtScroll Siddur*, this prayer having been selected as it is traditionally set line for line, resulting in an uneven space down the centre of the spread. Although traditionally only a few prayers are set line for line in such a format, the advantage of splitting prayers phrase for phrase, like poetry, is that it helps the reader correctly punctuate the prayers. A large proportion of our prayers are poetic and would benefit from such a layout. However, in addition to the central white space, there are further failings with such a layout. The purpose of translation is for reference when required; normally this would be from the start of a sentence. But in this layout the Hebrew starts at the far right of each page and its corresponding translation is at the furthest possible point, at the far left. Furthermore, when one's primary objective is praying (smoothly without unnecessary distractions) in Hebrew, it is not ideal that each line of Hebrew converges into the oncoming line of English.



Figure 7

The suggested logic for the instigation of this format is that when viewing a double-page spread, the logical place to position the Hebrew is on the right-hand page, as Hebrew is read from right to left. However, there is one key flaw in such a supposition. A Siddur is a book and one must take into account the mechanics of turning the pages of a book, not just viewing a double-page spread (as in a poster). An English book reads from left to right, and when printing on only one side of an English book's page, it is the right-hand side of each double-page spread which is printed, with the left-hand side remaining blank. This is because it is the right-hand side which the reader first sees when turning the pages of an English book. Subsequently, in a Hebrew book, reading from right to left, it is the left-hand side which one sees first, and thus would be printed. Applying such logic to a Siddur, which reads right to left with Hebrew the primary language, results in the left to right pages being reversed from the order used by the *Authorised Daily Prayer Book* and *ArtScroll Siddur*. The *Koren Bi-lingual Siddur* (Figure 8) uses such a layout.

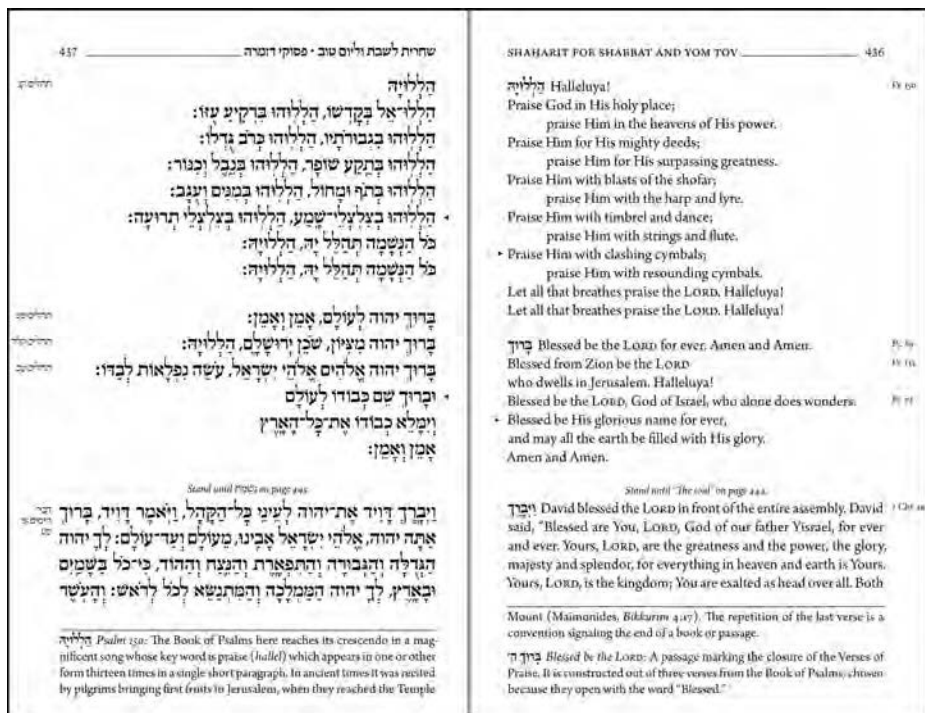


Figure 8

The Koren layout results in white space, due to the lines being split poetically, being in the outer margins, where the siddur is held. This ensures that text is not obscured and many prayers are set poetically, line for line, such as those in Figure 8. The Hebrew and English start adjacent to each other for ease of reference, but the translation does not present as a distraction as the Hebrew is read away from the English. Similarly (as illustrated), the references to the texts are in the outer margins, separated by the white space, whereas in the traditional format (Figure 7) references frequently merge with rubrics and/or the prayers. The Hebrew is also on the side of the page the reader first sees when turning over a leaf. Such a format was first used by Koren in 1965 in a bi-lingual *Haggadah* published by Koren and distributed through the Soncino Press, London and New York.

Figure 9 shows a double-page spread from this *Haggadah*. A key difference between the typography of this and other publications under the artistic guidance of Eliahu Koren, and that of the Koren 2009 *Bi-lingual Siddur* under the typographic direction of Rafaël Freeman, is the approach to the English typography. Eliahu Koren was very much one for symmetry, balancing the Hebrew to the English line for line. As seen in Figure 9, this frequently resulted in the English font size being significantly smaller than the Hebrew and excessive line-spacing within the English setting. Koren walked a fine line balancing aesthetics and legibility and on occasion, such as here, the quality of the English typography suffered. When discussing his approach to having the Hebrew set to the left of the English with Eliahu Koren in 1984, it was the aesthetic of reading out from the centre and alignment of Hebrew with its translation that Koren highlighted. He had not considered the additional advantage as to which side of the page the reader first sees when the page is turned. Koren had discussed applying this layout to other works with American publishers at the time but none were willing to risk setting the Hebrew to the left.¹²

The approach to the English typesetting by Freeman in the *Koren Bi-lingual Siddur* differs inasmuch as the English typography is not compromised for the sake of balancing it with the Hebrew (which is anyway unachievable). The English subsequently does not necessarily align with its Hebrew counterpart, but can still easily be referenced through the initial Hebrew words repeated at the start of the English translation. *ArtScroll*, and more recently the *Authorised Daily Prayer Book*, use a similar approach to matching texts

12 Simon Prais, *Design Considerations affecting the simultaneous use of Latin and Hebrew Typography*, 1984.



Figure 9

to their translation by repeating the initial Hebrew words.¹³ This is even more crucial for these publications as the distance is not either side of the margin but over the full expanse of the double-page spread.

The general approach to the typography of the *Koren Bi-lingual Siddur* was first applied to the Hebrew-only *Koren Siddur* of 1982. This includes the format for inclusion of sections said only on specific occasions. For this, Koren provided the most logical and practical solution. Until then, for a prayer that was only read once a month or once a year, the general approach by others had been to make it smaller as it is not crucial to everyday use and so does not justify taking up more than the minimum of space. This had resulted in the pre-2006 editions of the *Authorised Daily Prayer Book* having occasional texts, ones with which the reader would not be so familiar, set in a smaller font size but still over the full width of the page. The consequence of this is that the number of words per line is increased, but legibility is reduced, not just due to the text being smaller but because the number of words per line exceeds the maximum recommended for ease of reading. The outcome is detrimental; texts with which the reader is not familiar are made unnecessarily harder to read.

13 This technique can be seen in much earlier prayer books, such as in the *Mahzorim* printed by M Phillips, London to the customs of German and Polish Jews, 1823.

ArtScroll Publications take the approach of reducing the font size but also highlighting such texts with a grey tone behind these sections. However, this technique makes the words even more difficult to read as the contrast is significantly reduced and the edges of letters merge with the dots of the grey tone. By comparison, Koren differentiated these occasional prayers by using a smaller font size, but rather than further reducing legibility by utilizing the full line width and/or adding a grey tint, the text is simply set indented. This crucial expedient provides a helpful visual indication that it is an occasional section and reduces the words-per-line count to aid legibility. The same approach, a most logical practical solution, is applied in the 2006 *Authorised Daily Prayer Book*.

The Koren Siddur provides further unique characteristics. The original 1982 *Koren Siddur* contained a physical link to the *Koren Tanakh* inasmuch as sections of the *Siddur* which originate from the *Tanakh* were reproduced from the artwork prepared for the *Tanakh*. Other than saving on the cost of resetting these sections for use in the *Siddur*, it provided a direct relationship to the *Tanakh*. The use of the *Koren Book* font for the other sections in the *Siddur* provided the benefit of a subtle visual differentiation.

There was, however, considerable editing still required as the *Tanakh* contained both vowels and notes (which had originally all been positioned by hand), whereas only vowels were required in the *Siddur* setting. All the notes had to be removed by hand, as did adjustments where a *k'ri/k'tiv* needed to be replaced with just the *k'ri* for the *Siddur*. This resulted in some inconsistencies in word spacing and vowels which had been previously positioned to accommodate a note to their side. There were also inconsistencies between the *Tanakh* and the *Siddur* typesetting of a *Kamatz Katan* and also of the furtive *Patah*, due to different approaches applied to the original *Tanakh* font setting and that of the *Koren Book* font. All these variations have now been standardised in the *Koren Bi-lingual Siddur*.

Koren designed unique layouts for some pages. This includes *Barukh she-amar* which highlights the extent to which Eliahu Koren was concerned with balancing legibility and aesthetics, even if it meant compromising his rigid principles. Figure 10 illustrates the *Barukh she-amar* page from the original 1982 edition. As the text does not originate from the *Tanakh*, it is, therefore, set in *Koren Book* font. However, the first four words have been set in *Koren Tanakh* font. This must have been a deliberate choice, as setting the words in the *Koren Tanakh* font would have required considerable work in using the metal type, rather than the easier process of phototypesetting in *Koren Book* font. It was apparent from the first print run of the *Koren Bi-lingual Siddur*

(Figure 11) why Koren went to such trouble. The angled top of the letter *Reish* in the *Koren Siddur* font reduces the impact achieved from the square format of the *Koren Tanakh* font. Subsequent editions of the *Bi-lingual Siddur* now match Koren's original style for weekday *Shaharit* (but the same text in *Shabbat Shaharit* has not been corrected). Unfortunately, the expanded rubrics and inclusion of a commentary results in the lower block of the text in the bi-lingual edition having to flow on to the next page, thereby detracting from the original layout.



Figure 10



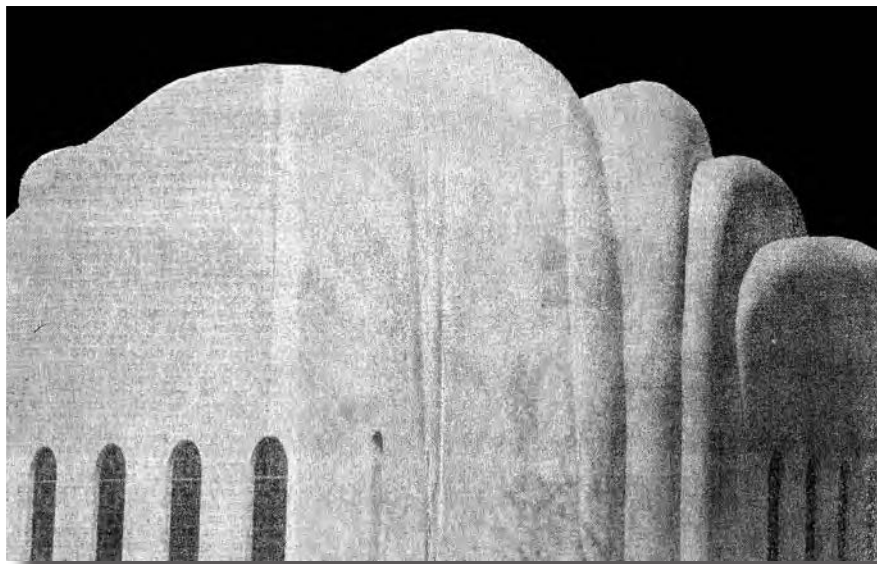
Figure 11

Summation

The Koren approach to layout achieves optimum levels of legibility and readability, while also being innovative and aesthetically surpassing other *siddurim*. Its combined usage of the *Koren Tanakh* and *Koren Book* fonts serves as an intrinsic reminder of prayers originating from the Tanakh. The

font design alludes to the influence of the traditional style whilst optimized for maximum legibility and beauty, derived from sacred historic references.

Having gained an MA Degree in Visual Communication specializing in multilingual typography, Simon Prais founded TypeMaker (t/a Color Confidence) in 1986, offering one of the first PostScript design and typesetting services in the UK. His continuing interest in multilingual typography has expanded to specialization in the development of the Hebrew alphabet, technological advances in the field and related challenges for bi-lingual typography. Simon lives in Birmingham (UK) with his wife Sybil and two daughters, Ariella and Ronit.



The Salonika Synagogue in Tel-Aviv, 1986; photo by Aliza Urbach

The Shell and the Pearl: Form and Function in Synagogue Architecture

By Gideon Ofrat

Great rulers knew how to perpetuate their names through buildings. Herod left herodion in Transjordan, Titus left the Arch of Triumph in Rome, Pompidou left the Art Center named after him in Paris. How will the Tel-Aviv of Shlomo “Chich” Lahat’s era be remembered? Will the amoeba of Dizengoff Square immortalize his tenure as mayor, or perhaps the Asian House, a wedding cake in the style of the New York Guggenheim—or maybe the annoyingly round-shouldered Dizengoff Center? It’s hard to tell. History’s great leaders are remembered as much for the buildings they destroyed (Titus destroyed the Second Jerusalem Temple, Pompidou Les Halles—Paris’ venerable wholesale markets). To Lahat’s credit it must be said that at least he didn’t destroy much. In any event, the monument to his era in Tel-Aviv can be characterized by the following results: white stone surfaces instead of plaster; rejection of the bare concrete structures of his predecessor Yehoshua Rabinovich’s tenure (Atarim Square); revulsion with the basic geometric fortresses that had

typified Tel-Aviv from the 1930s until the city's discovery of multi-storied construction on reinforced columns. Instead of geometric uniformity the Chich era's style lies in the monumentality of organic forms, foreign to their surroundings though they may be.

Now, to the existent amoeba, cake and shoulders has been added a monumental *white conch* intended to serve as a synagogue for the Salonikan-descended community of Tel-Aviv. This giant shell flaunts itself at the corner of Ibn-Gabirol and Jabotinsky Streets not far from a humble little synagogue, and turns its back scornfully to the atheistic socialists of the Vaad Hapo'eil. Look-alike huts surround this new building named after Leon Recanati,¹ defying the protection of local politicians in favor of Heavenly security. Tel-Aviv does *t'shuvah*.

How do we reach the Holy One? Possibly by placing folded notes in crannies of the Western Wall, or by praying on a street corner or in a garden—as taught by the Hasidim, or by topping buildings with skullcaps as in the case of Tel-Aviv's Great Synagogue or Jerusalem's Heikhal Shlomo. And when God does not come to the synagogue it's possible to bring the synagogue to God—without forcing the issue: doing something to the building's walls and roof so that they'll elevate our prayers sufficiently to capture the Divine spirit.

How to accomplish this? Cathedral builders achieved it with extreme height (recall Ibsen's hero, the “master builder” Solness who climbed his newly-completed church's tower and laid a wreath atop it while singing to God above). Our Israeli architects, who realize that even at a height of fifty meters we won't reach God, decided simply to set a trap for the Deity. Heinz Rau captured God at the campus of Hebrew University in 1957 when he parked a white spaceship on it—or if you prefer—induced God to swallow a white mushroom. In 1961 Joseph Neufeld enclosed God within Marc Chagall's stifling cage between the stone monsters of Hadassah Hospital in Ein Kerem. God is also imprisoned in the religious school near Yemin-Ord outside of Haifa, among a camp of pointed tents purporting to serve as a synagogue.

The Recanati Synagogue's original architects, Yitzhak Toledano (of blessed memory) and Aharon Rousso, tried to swallow the Lord inside a conch which they dropped over Him; viewed from its side the building seems to have slipped to the ground, as if to personify the biblical “Sukkah of David that has fallen.”² Building a synagogue is no easy job. Not only is one obliged to fill the gap left

1 A Salonika-born Israeli banker and industrialist (1890-1945) who helped save Greek Jews fleeing Nazi terror, granted them loans and financed Yad Eliyahu, a residential area for them near Tel-Aviv.

2 *Sukkat david ha-nofalet*, Amos 9:11.

by our destroyed Temple, one must also honor the tradition that a synagogue represents “the People of Israel’s most original and seminal creation” (according to the French historian Ernest Renan).³ Really? When you examine the pretentiousness of those who criticize synagogues as “Judaism’s original religious space” you don’t understand exactly what’s intended. That’s because the mosaic floors in ancient synagogues in Israel and its neighboring countries, the wall murals of the Dura-Europos Synagogue in Syria, the ornate Arks of Italian Renaissance synagogues and the magnificent wall paintings of 17th-century Polish synagogues—you see legitimate design and impressive decoration that counter the myth of “You shall not make for yourself any graven image...” (Exodus 20: 4). Yet, are these sacred edifices truly original?

Pyramid and Glass Tower

It would seem that ever since our ancestors first began to gather in Babylonian halls and turn their eyes yearningly westward towards where the Temple once stood, they’ve never stopped imitating the holy sanctuaries of other nations. That which respected professors term “an independent Jewish architectural form” actually grew from basilicas: halls that served as gathering places for city dwellers and municipal councils in Greece and Rome. In defense of the Jewish synagogue let it be noted that at least its two parallel rows of columns with a raised platform in the area between them⁴ influenced the architecture of early churches. But again, from where were these features borrowed—understandably, from the basilicas. What is so terrible about that, aside from its bringing back the old canard about there being no original Jewish form? Essentially, we may lay claim to the specific development of four interior columns flanking a central platform,⁵ i.e. a very limited contribution of originality. When it comes to incorporating outside influences the Roman Catholic Church exceeds all, yet, that never seems to arouse the critics.

Indeed, the Church wasn’t the only borrower. Columned Syrian and Greek temples, circular Roman temples and Byzantine domes all served as inspiration for our synagogue builders. We can take the round “Yeshurun” Synagogue in Jerusalem and replant it on a Roman foundation in exactly the way that the columns surrounding the (renovated and newly decorated) Great Synagogue in Tel-Aviv beg comparison with their Gothic prototypes. In 1962 things reached

3 *Histoire du peuple d’Israël*, 1887-93.

4 As in the Royal Portico of Herod’s Temple, Leen Ritmeyer, *The Temple and the Rock*, 1996: 7.

5 Seen in Vilna’s Great Synagogue, Rachel Wischnitzer, *The Architecture of the European Synagogue*, 1964: 119.

the point where a Jewish Mandarin named Chou Ing Chang built a synagogue in Kai-Fu, China, which resembled a pagoda-shaped temple in almost every detail. Except that it faced west instead of east as is customary among Chinese temples, we might mistakenly relate to the rabbi as a Buddha.

We should therefore not be surprised to find a synagogue in Augsburg, Germany with Aztec ornamentation, or a synagogue in Philadelphia that was influenced by archeological discoveries in 19th-century Egypt. Pleasant or not, it's a fact that even Muslim cemeteries served as models for our synagogues, in the context of an Orientalism that dominated institutional architecture at the 19th century's close. Small wonder, then, that the exemplary American architect Frank Lloyd Wright designed a "temple" in 1954 in the shape of a pyramid-cum-glass tower. What is the connection, you ask? Admittedly, many synagogues have affixed Ten Commandments above their entrances—upon which is engraved the dictum—"Do not steal." Despite this admonition, where building style is concerned, Jewish synagogues have borrowed much from the gentiles. And if we recall all the prior models that influenced the look and layout of churches, we may safely apply the talmudic postulate, "he who steals from a thief is innocent."

Nothing has had a greater impact on synagogue builders than the example of the Gothic cathedral. Vienna, for instance, benefited from more Gothic synagogues than any other city. The architect Max Fleischer built three of them: on Schmelzhofgasse; on Milnergasse; and on Neudergasse. To this day novice priests still mistakenly enter these buildings routinely. Elsewhere, in Charleston, South Carolina, Temple Beth Elohim was erected towards the end of the 19th century with a bell tower, just as described in Shaul Tchernikhovsky's well-known poem.⁶ If Rashi did not object to his Worms Synagogue (destroyed by the Nazis in 1938) being a miniature copy of the town's cathedral, why not simply take over defunct churches and convert them into "instant synagogues?" There's nothing new in this suggestion; Jewish communities did this often during the 19th century. And scholars tell of altars in 18th-century churches closed by Hapsburg Emperor Joseph II, that were converted by Jews into synagogue Bimahs. By the same token, numerous synagogues were converted into churches.

A notorious example of the latter is the Synagogue of Rabbi Yitzhak Nahmanash, president of the community in Lvov (Yiddish: Lemberg). At the request of Jesuits the building was excommunicated in 1606 and sanctified as a church. Only due to the intercession of Rabbi Yitzhak's wife Roza before the local archbishop was the building returned to the Jewish Kehillah (religious community) five years later. From then on she was called *Gildene Roiz* ("Golden Rose").

6 *The First Dead* (1942), "A pity! The white belfry is not ours," tr. T. Carmi, *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse*, 1981: 521.

A darker fate befell the synagogue of Toledo, Spain. Built in the second half of the 12th century in the style of Cordova's mosque, it was converted three centuries later into the "Church of Santa María la Blanca." Worse still was what happened to Masada's synagogue in the second century, converted by the Roman authorities into a stable.

Any architect who builds a synagogue thinking it will immortalize his name must be an optimist. Of the 480 synagogues that stood in Jerusalem in the 1st century of the Common Era, according to the legend based on the prophetic statement, *m'leiti mishpat, tzedek yalin bah* ("Righteous judgement filled the faithful city;" Isaiah 1: 21), and particularly on the *gematriya* (numerical equivalent) of the word *m'leiti*—481—very few survived the destructive acts of Roman Emperor Vespasian (69-79 CE). Early in the 4th century an anonymous Christian visited Jerusalem and told of seven synagogues that had been gutted on Mt. Zion alone. "They cried and mourned over synagogues," wrote an 11th-century Jewish poet in depicting their destruction at the decree of the Egyptian sultan; scores of synagogues were consumed by fire. But what were those scores in comparison to 1800 (that's correct—eighteen hundred!) wooden synagogues, the pride of Polish Jewry that some claim to have maintained a Khazar (Hebrew: *Kuzari*) tradition dating back to the 9th century, that were decimated in Poland and the Ukraine during Cossack rampages under Bogdan Chmielnicki in the 17th century?

And were that not enough, is there need to mention what happened to synagogues in the Old City of Jerusalem under Jordanian occupation after the War of Independence, not to speak of the hundreds of synagogues torched by the Nazis on Kristallnacht, November 9, 1938? A horror story concerning a small-town German school teacher in Bavaria is relevant here. He set the local synagogue aflame, wanting to witness "fireworks." Sparks fell from its dome and exploded on the stone floor near the Ark. As the silken curtain went up in flames the terrified arsonist remained transfixed, frozen by the sight. Shortly afterwards he was overtaken by a fit of depression. For days on end he stared out of his window at the spot where the synagogue had stood. After a while—so the local villagers relate—he was committed to the sanitarium at Ansbach.

Yet, should you think of that and other synagogues as pure and passive sacrifices to violent gentiles, you'd be mistaken. It seems that one of the uses to which Jewish houses of worship were widely put was military—in the context of self-defense. Contrary to the accepted picture of frightened Jews huddled around the *Aron kodesh* during pogroms in the diaspora (or in the Holy Land—the synagogue atop the Mount of Olives served as a final refuge

for Jerusalem's Jews when Crusaders captured the city from Muslims in the 12th century), the synagogue has also known bravery and even aggression. Older readers will surely remember how during Israel's War of Independence synagogues in the Old City functioned as important positions for the young Jewish defenders (conflicts between them and elderly ultra-Orthodox Hareidim have been portrayed by Yehoshua bar-Yosef in his play *Al homotayikh yerushalayim* ("On Your Walls, Jerusalem," 1978). Recall, if you will, the Yohanan ben Zakai Synagogue that served as a corral where the Old City's Jewish population was herded and from where it was taken to Jordanian prisons. In the Hurvah Synagogue, one of the front-line defense posts, were stored flags of the Jewish Brigade that fought for the British Army during World War I.

From the Depths

In our discussion of "military" synagogues, however, we have in mind much more. Any one passing through Haderah may visit the synagogue erected by Yehudit Shtulzer in 1935. It contains several fortress-like elements, chiefly its tower that was designed as a lookout post to guard against Arab attacks. "Observation" synagogues were a means of self-defense that the Jews of Poland had devised in the 17th century to protect their towns. Along with watchtowers, the synagogue walls were notched with firing-holes. The Jews of Lutsk built a fortified synagogue at the behest of King Sigismund III. He also ordered "that the Rabbinitic Jews see to it that on the four corners of the synagogue roof there are sufficient muskets, that adequate funds are provided to acquire a proper cannon... and that they pre-appoint specific men who are capable of defense in the event of an attack by idol-worshippers..."

All honor to the Jews of Poland! The most oppressed Aliyah among all the waves of immigration that washed up on Israel's shores can raise its head proudly—and not only because our prime minister as this is being written—Yitzhak Shamir—is of Polish descent. The first synagogue art to be found was developed in Poland. The most splendid synagogues in Israel, exemplars for all categories of Israeli artists—the Ari Synagogue in Safed as example—belong to the Polish tradition of the 17th and 18th centuries. A Polish artisan from Galici crafted the Ari Synagogue's Ark, and rabbi Judah the Pious, who came to the Holy Land from Poland in the 12th century "to hasten the Redemption through self-affliction, fasting, prayer, charity and mourning over the exile of God's presence," understood that along with all the above he'd have to bribe the head of the Ishmaelites in Jerusalem before they'd allow him to build the

two most magnificent synagogues that the city had ever known—the Hurvah and Tif'eret Yisrael.

When we write “magnificent” we mean magnificent. Any one taking the trouble to walk downstairs at the Israel Museum to the room which houses an 18th-century Italian synagogue that's been restored will see painted and gilded wooden carvings that would not embarrass a church in Arokit/Erokit. It's generally worthwhile to browse in the Israel Museum in order to appreciate what it means to build a synagogue. The doors of the Rambam Synagogue from 11th-century Cairo or the painted interior of the Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam merely hint at the rich aura of that architectural tradition. And if the aforementioned are not enough, a visit to the Beit Hat'futsot in Tel-Aviv, with its impressive collection of synagogue models from around the globe, should suffice.

Glorious external portals, opulent interiors—these present a great dilemma for the synagogue—even greater than it seems. Hasidim created the model of a *shtibl* or a *kloiz*—the humble prayer-room as alternative to the magnificent temple-like synagogue. In religious worship, the Hasidim tell us, intense heartfelt prayer does not require any “reinforcement.” The majority of synagogues in Israel—Ashkenazi and Sephardic—were built on this principle, often not so much from lack of artistic know-how as from lack of financial resources. Still there are the Arlinger Street Synagogue in Tel-Aviv's Central Station and the synagogues of Jerusalem's Nah'lat Sheva. Here, excessive aestheticism is summed up in an eclectic abundance of gifts from widows and widowers: Ark curtains; Readers Desk covers; brass Menorahs; silver Torah finials. We feel a certain intimate warmth, but not much more. Is this the desired aim of a Jewish house of prayer—an answer to the substantive sensuality of idol-worshippers?

Does a synagogue's exterior need to entice worshipers into entering its gates in order to stand naked and barren before the Creator? This has been a major issue in the history of synagogue architecture, and it didn't always arise because of ideological objections. Awareness of building restrictions within the ghetto, continued oppression and relentless persecution brought about a characteristic humbling of synagogue exteriors. Painted murals on the synagogue walls in Dura-Europos adorn an otherwise unimposing building located in a narrow alleyway off of a side street. Even ultra-decorated Italian Renaissance synagogues are careful not to attract attention to their exteriors. By contrast, the magnificent facades replete with columns, bas-relief work, arches, etc., of ancient synagogues are clearly meant to invite worshipers. Here there was no question of fear from a hostile environment.

What to employ when hostility existed—monkish simplicity or unexpected grandeur? Inside or out? Raphael Blumenfeld and Meir Pinchuk, who assumed the project of completing the new Salonikan Synagogue after the architect Toledano's death, were aware of these historical considerations. Their solutions were dictated in no small measure by the building's specifications in relation to its given area. As to whether they would be content with a superb outer shell or would concentrate on creating an extraordinary pearl within it, the shell itself supplied the answers.

Nothing could shift the building's orientation from south to east, for example, this had literally already been set in cement. If one were to continue in a straight line from the central Bimah through the Aron Kodesh one would end up in Beersheba rather than Jerusalem. The floor level was also a given—not lower than the ground outside—despite the tradition's insistence on a lower floor according to the verse, "From the depths do I call upon you, O God" (Psalm 130). True there is a basement area that serves as a daily chapel, a kind of Salonikan "*shtibl*"—setting for any intimate Minyan. Unfortunately, the main Sanctuary's level is that of the surrounding streets. Even the façade's structural elements, which suggest a compromise between the twin tablets of the Covenant and (dare I mention it?) the Holy trinity, are hard to swallow—though copied from the *Aron kodesh* that the new architectural team had designed. As for meeting the Tradition's additional requirement that a synagogue's height exceed that of its neighboring buildings, here too, besides the *fait-accompli* factor there is lack of certain knowledge. Conceivably, the nearby commercial towers will cede their places to all sorts of buildings in the future. Moreover, we may count on the community of Salonika expatriates to acquire properties adjacent to their synagogue in order to ensure its survival. And if a skyscraper should rise nearby—no matter—one can always argue that it's a memorial to the exilic stipulation that a synagogue be lower than its surrounding churches.

Understandably, the extravagance of this giant white shell draws our attention first and foremost. Why a shell? Very simple: a reminder of beloved Salonika sitting at the water's edge. By the same token they might have built their synagogue in the shape of a Bureka.⁷ Interesting that the synagogue's outer skin—the shell—controls its inner space as well. The arched rafters of poured concrete that support the Sanctuary ceiling from back to front above worshipers' heads come together at the Ark, which they transform into the bow of an overturned ship (another echo of Salonika) or perhaps Noah's Ark. The

7 Rectangular Middle Eastern puffed pastry patty, most commonly stuffed with cheese or spinach filling.

synagogue's architectonic blueprint also compels a strange perception of the term *ezrat nashim*—the Women's Gallery. In the best tradition of suppressing women (which often left them in the situation of "seeing but not being seen"), the Salonikan Synagogue's architects have crammed the women into an extremely high balcony. There they are indeed closer to God than their husbands and enjoy an astronaut's view of the hazzan and the Torah, which are "as grasshoppers in their eyes (Numbers 14:33). Worse, the women reach their lofty perch only with a lot of huffing and puffing. A special *ma'alit shabbat* ("Sabbath elevator" that goes from ground to gallery levels and back again automatically) was planned, but no money remained for that purpose. After all, we're only talking about women.

Without Sustenance There Is No Learning

According to Rafi Blumenfeld and Associates—in whose hands was left the task of reconciling the Salonikan Synagogue's exterior and interior—a lot remains to be done. This is an extremely sensitive area, as the saying goes, a nerve's reaction is easily seen. The exterior's extravagance—grandly provocative—will induce the Salonikans to come and pray. However, many of them live south of Tel-Aviv and it's unclear why they situated their new building in the north. They'll be obliged to drive to it on Sabbaths and holidays. Actually, their previous building was also located on Ibn-Gabirol Street, opposite Town Hall, and perhaps they'd grown accustomed to this paradox.

The synagogue's interior bespeaks simplicity, another puzzle. And rest assured that the plain interior's underlying purpose is not to avoid interfering with the worshipers' intense concentration while davening. Rafi Blumenfeld and his partner see themselves as serving the dominant form created by the original architects. The exterior shape—repeated in the inner sacred space through the skin's undersurface—motivates a sense of reduction and simplification. This feeling informs the walls' and ceiling's stark whiteness, the non-cushioned oaken benches, the sparsity of accessories and then only essential ones like the Ark. If so, one might question the colored old curtain of Salonikan Jewry that fronts the Ark—but there's nothing to be discussed concerning such a treasured relic of the immigrant community.

Realistically, the Sanctuary would be impossible without any color. Anyone who's seen the richly decorated interiors that Rafi Blumenfeld designed for Asia House, the IBM Building and the Knesset's Plenary Hall (remember the public uproar about the fabrics that he hung over the heads of our parliamentary members?) know that the man specifically goes for an expressive

statement. Therefore, shell or no shell, a carpet is spread inside from wall to wall, bearing blue / gold / red (to disguise stains?) images, and therefore, the stained-glass windows as well. Is a synagogue even conceivable without stained-glass windows? These were made by Yosef Sh'altiel, born in Turkey but closer to Salonikan culture and amenable to the compelling argument of the Recanati Brothers—no less—that the windows depict in detail what every holiday is all about.” The dozen windows (of glass specially imported from Saint-Gobain, France) have been transformed into twelve holy days—including Shabbat and Yom ha-atzma'ut. This was the only way to bring the number of Jewish holidays up to twelve. And the over-all design was thereby forced to relinquish some of its stark simplicity in deference to the figurative taste of the Salonikan congregation.

For it must be emphasized: just as the cathedrals were built by all the inhabitants of a city, so too was the synagogue named after Leon Recanati built by the hands of the Jews from Salonika as a tangible community project. The chief sponsor—Recanati—is a Salonikan. Moshe Corso, after whom the synagogue vestibule is named in recognition of his sizable contribution, is also from Salonika. Every congregant who came from there donated according to his or her means. Rousso and Toledano, the original architects, were also from Salonika, and as noted, the artist responsible for the stained-glass windows came from nearby. The only outsider is Rafi Blumenfeld—a *Yekke*⁸—oh well, an exception only proves the rule! The “problem” was resolved by forming a public committee of Salonikans who supervised him and approved every aspect of his design. In classic Sephardic style (“Let Master Raphael tell us what he thinks...”) the Salonikans enmeshed Blumenfeld in their net. They applied pressure on the side of conservatism, as counterbalance to the modernism that was present ever since the shell went up. Essentially they wanted a synagogue like the one they were used to—with marble columns, lions, etc.

The architects' modernism was not in step with the committee members' preference. So they insisted on transferring the Memorial tablets and Ark curtain from their former synagogue on Ibn-Gabirol Street to the new sanctuary. That way, the move appeared not overly disruptive. They objected to modern lighting and vetoed the idea of installing pseudo-antique Menorahs, settling instead for new ones that exude modernity while hinting at the Menorahs from Sephardic synagogues they'd seen at Beit Hat'futsot. Even the artisan who shaped the exterior concrete into bas-reliefs, Yehezkel Kimhi, had to accept the committee's choice of Jewish symbols (Ten Commandments, Menorah, Magen David, biblical verses), including several typical Salonikan motifs: ocean waves and white

8 Of German-Jewish descent.

tower. Taking pride of place was the phrase, *Im ein kemah ein torah* (“Without sustenance there is no learning”), a common coin among Salonikans.

In Sephardic synagogues the Bimah, from which prayer is offered and the Torah is read, stands rather high. The Salonikan committee demanded that women as well as men be able to see the hazzan from all sides. Indeed, those men who sit around the Bimah will see him as he reads from the Torah scroll which stands in an upright position rather than resting flat upon the Readers table as in Ashkenazi practice. Those seated near the Ark have a slight problem, due to the classic challenge that confronts every architect who designs a synagogue—the relationship between Bimah and Ark. Here it has been met in a manner that is liable to divide the Salonikan congregation after many years of solidarity. Those seated between Bimah and Ark normally face the Ark because that’s the direction in which their seats are orientated. This leaves their backs turned to the hazzan and to those facing him around the Bimah. Do you understand? When the Torah is read, those seated forward will have to contort their upper bodies rather uncomfortably for the better part of an hour.

No matter, the synagogue named after Leon Recanati is an impressive and original building, a source of tremendous pride for the Salonikan community in Israel. When they see visiting architects and students of the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design staring and admiring from the Bimah, it dawns on them that they have built not just a synagogue but an enduring work of art. The white shell and its surrounding grounds that are about to be laid out by landscape architect Gideon Sharig guarantee that not only will Salonikan Jews from Upper Rehovot, Herzl, etc. be riding north to their Sanctuary, but many others as well—perhaps even Ashkenazim. It seems the colors of the stained-glass windows are prone to shift and surprise unexpectedly with the changing light. Anyone who cannot find a place inside will do well to gaze at these vitreous marvels from the outside.

*Gideon Ofrat, a leading Israeli critic, is the author of **100 Years of Israeli Art** (1998). This article is translated from an undated clipping (ca. 1987) from Yis-*

The “Spaciousness” of Ernest Bloch’s

Avodath Hakodesh

By Albert Weisser

Here at last a composer of the first magnitude has given the Hebrew liturgy the *large and spacious setting* it deserves... distinguished by a dramatic lyricism, a transparency of texture and an elusive simplicity, a combination of qualities which other less gifted composers have since frequently sought to imitate, unsuccessfully.

Hugo D. Weisgall

Without doubt the *Avodath Hakodesh* (Sacred Service),¹ Bloch’s first large scale Jewish work written in America, is the work of a great contemporary master, and it may very likely be the finest effort among Bloch’s entire “Jewish Cycle.”² Though the much earlier *Three Jewish Poems* (1913), *Schelomo* (1916) and the *Israel Symphony* (1916) contain page after page of grand eloquence and incomparable beauty and have by now become the measuring rod of western Jewish music, they are occasionally marred by an excessive hysteria and a Straussian rhetoric. These may inject a certain element of drama into Bloch’s frescoes, yet they tend to leave an impression of a curious off-balance. The *Service*, however, exhibits a magnificent poise and assuredness as to both craft and creative temperament.

“What is refreshing also is Bloch’s unmistakably Palestrinian texture, rightly recognizing the close congruousness between the “Roman Chant” and ancient Hebrew cantillation.”³ This is an extremely important accomplishment on Bloch’s part because it has shown one direction in which composers working with cantillatory elements can be freed from the straight-jacket of nineteenth century homophony. This was important also in light of Bloch’s own personal style because it made him abandon, temporarily at least (as some years earlier in occasional portions of his *Concerto Grosso*) certain Impressionistic harmonic procedures that tended to intrude upon the freedom of his musical speech. To be sure Palestrina does not hover over the entire *Service*, for Baroque elements are not entirely absent. But now when vertical methods are used, as in the incomparably beautiful *Mah Tovv* (How Goodly

1 Bloch, Ernest, *Sacred Service* (Boston: C. C. Birchard), 1934.

2 An extended discussion of Bloch’s towering position in the renaissance of modern Jewish music is not included here because the writer feels his earlier large scale Jewish works belong more in the orbit of Western and Central Europe and must remain outside the set confines of this article.

3 The Gregorian elements in Bloch’s *Service* were first noted by Lazare Saminsky, see his illuminating analysis in *Music of the Ghetto and the Bible* (New York: Bloch) 1934: 176-180.

Are Your Tents, O Jacob), the lines move clearly, independently and with a lovely sonority:

Mah Tov

CANTOR **Tempo I^o**
 ② *poco rit.* **p** *breve*

Mah to - vu o - ha - le - cha Ya - a - kov, mish - ke - no - se - cho Yis -
 How good - ly are thy tents, Ya - a kov, good - ly thy dwell - ings, Is -

poco rit. **pp** *breve*

Neither is there an absence of personality in the *Service*, for Bloch is imprinted on every page. We are not speaking of such visible traits as those exhibited in the opening of the *Adon Olom* (Eternal God) which strike us as a bit forced and stagey. We mean more the undefinable lineaments which move with such strokes of genius in the *Yih'yu L'rotzon* (May the Words of My Mouth) and in the *Meditation* of Part 1:

Meditation

Moderato (♩=84)

pp *poco cresc.*

The *Service* further exhibits an attitude on the part of Bloch which views the liturgy as a reenactment of an awesome and poignant drama. Thus, the tension and ecstasy of the *Sh'ma Yisroel* (Hear, O Israel) and the *Yimloch Adonoy Le'olom* (The Lord shall Reign Forever). Thus too, the subdued *Tzur Yisroel* (Oh Rock of Israel) and the serene *Va'anachnu Kor'im* (Adoration). There is also present what would seem an intended play of internal dialogue between cantor and chorus which, though neither in the form of the question and answer of the so-called Medieval dialogue tropes or the more familiar antiphony and "response" of the Catholic and Judaic liturgical traditions, act

more in Bloch's devices as commentary upon each other. Even structurally the *Service* is set out in dramatic terms with its larger division into five parts (the last acting as epilogue) and the inclusion of two symphonic preludes and an interlude which form the necessary contrast to the vocal sections and play the role of scene-setting overture and inserted entr'actes.

The question of the specific use of the old cantillation and the traditional song in this *Service* is a fascinating one—not so much because these elements are hidden or are not decipherable—but because they afford the musical mind's process a rare and pleasing opportunity of watching the genuinely creative apparatus at work in an area in which too few are successful. For after all, other composers have fashioned the old cantillation and ritual chant “unto themselves,” but few have invested them with a more personal yet universal contour as has Bloch in his *Service*. He has done this by an art of *broad dimensions and depth* which could select in the “usable past” (both inside and outside the Judaic frame) that which ever remains precious and vital and which could simultaneously reject the cobwebs, the extraneous and the pedestrian. It may well be argued whether this contour hinders rather than prompts religious worship. Our view holds to the latter. It further holds that Bloch's *Sacred Service* is one of the glories of Hebraic tonal art and that it may develop (as it already partially has) into the musical touchstone for all future composers of synagogal music.

*Dr. Albert Weisser, founding President of the American Society for Jewish Music in 1974, enjoyed a brilliant and multi-faceted career as musicologist, teacher, composer, pianist, accompanist, choral conductor, editor and bibliographer. This excerpt is from **The Modern Renaissance of Jewish Music** (New York: “Centennial” book, Bloch), 1954: 150-152, and is reprinted here with the publisher's kind permission.*

Designing Outdoor Space Structurally

By Uzzi Elmaleh

Like Frank Gehry in the northern Spanish town of Bilbao, Israeli architect Ron Arad has brought Holon, an obscure city five miles south of Tel Aviv, to worldwide attention with a startlingly innovative museum building. His **Design Museum Holon** (2010) bends five steel ribbons, oxidized to different shades of reddish-ochre, to wrap around what looks like the exterior of a sports stadium's terraced grandstand extending further outward with each rising tier. An open-air atrium at the core of this structure reveals the five steel bands spread widely enough apart to form a highly stylized steel-ribbed "wall" for a courtyard whose vertical space comprises a palpable structure of its own (**Figure 1**).

When the floating bands that wall off and partially canopy this courtyard are viewed from below, they resemble a metallic *s'khakh*¹ under which one feels sheltered from the everyday world. In effect, the Museum courtyard comprises a circular *sukkah*, every moment spent within it seems special. One can only gaze in awe through its gracefully curved orange bands and marvel at the cerulean blue sky beyond.

An exquisitely-proportioned space, the courtyard envelopes visitors like an ultra-modern cocoon in its colossal embrace. That was exactly the impact it had upon the first group I brought to see Israel's latest tourist attraction. Every subsequent visit to the Design Museum's courtyard only reinforced the feeling among guests that they had entered an area made holy by its inspired design.

Yet the Museum stands in a most unlikely spot, a semi-submerged gully hedged in by a heavy traffic on one side, a nondescript medical facility built of yellow-and-white cinderblock on the other, and a huge shopping-mall parking lot on its remaining two sides. Amid this urban unsightliness the Museum's inner courtyard, hidden from the view of passersby, offers an unmatched oasis of contemplative solitude.

At the time of this writing, even before the Museum's permanent collection had been installed, its gem of a courtyard gave promise of becoming Israel's undiscovered **Stonehenge in the Sky**.

Uzzi Elmaleh, of Moroccan rabbinic descent, has been a licensed tour guide in Israel for over twenty years. The above article is based upon introductory remarks he delivered before a group of visitors to the Design Museum in July of 2010. [JAL]

1 Thatched covering used as a roof for the *sukkah*.



Figure 1. Ron Arad's **Design Museum Holon**—
steel-ribbed “wall” of its inner courtyard.



NOW, FROM THIS PLACE

By Charles Davidson

Now, from this place

this land
this people
this nation

removed from Europe's age-old feuds
bounded by the Atlantic's surges
and Pacific's rollers
enclosed
safe
insulated with
waters at our shores
held in their embrace

this land apart
this people
this nation unique
our America

open to heavens of blue and black
fleecy wisps
whirling in flocks
that float above

peaks and plains stretch out below
their ranges in upward thrust
impatient at creation's limit
defined by lava
passing below
in verdant green and patchwork
in rainbow procession
canyons of deep purple and dotted slopes
of growing things
turned toward the horizon

we rested here secure
in this place
untrammelled by alien boots
distant and apart
from history's hurtful anger
and abuse

a land
a people
a nation
mourning

because here
at this place
arrived a fearful symmetry
on wings of hate so palpable
the heavens screamed
opening staining it and us
with issue not replaced
America
no longer separate
isolate
untouched
by violent discontent

raging anger
came to this place
and wrenched apart those loved
now
ephemeral
as mists of clouds
touched the tips
of spires standing here
which height assured a place
secure

perhaps this site was never remote from danger's thrust
perhaps at this place
we find a truth
not visited before
that there is no regard for life's gift
to those who see in this world no value
buttressed by trust and self-illusion
our precious gifts displayed
betrayed

by evil incarnate
plummeting memory burst
from this place
propelled into orbs of light
lives
point of light
as we watched from below

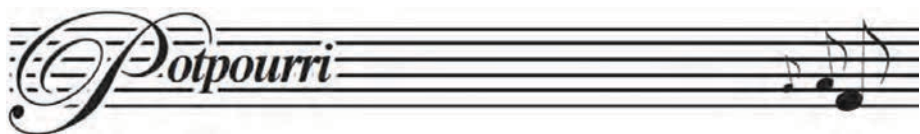
now let us embrace and clasp
the hands of wives and husbands
children, friends
strangers never met
remembrances drawn close
in spirit
seeking courage from their lives untimely ended
from lives ultimately stopped
we grasp each other

now
from this place
we ask
for vigilance and a promise
raising sight to the band of darkest blue
its brightest light
illuminating lost souls
on a day never forgot

by this land
by this people
by this nation
from this place

we remember

*Charles Davidson, one of America's most respected cantor/composers and the Nathan Cummings Professor Emeritus of Liturgy and Hazzanut at the Jewish Theological Seminary's H.L. Miller Cantorial School, is the author of **Sefer Hadrakahah: An Annotated Guide and Commentary on the Application of Nusah Hatefillah Beminhag Ashkenaz for the Liturgical Year** (2012). His compositions—featured on a Milken Archive CD (Naxos label)—effortlessly traverse musical styles ranging from Baroque to Yiddish folk to Jazz. His article, "The Tune's the Thing—Lessons Learned in a Half-Century as Cantor/Composer"—appeared in the Fall 2005 **Journal of Synagogue Music**. Davidson wrote this poem in 2006, as an invocation to his cantata, **I Love You... Goodbye—A Commemorative to the Families of 9/11 Victims**. He revised it for this reprint on September 18, 2011.*



Hugo Weisgall (1912-1997)—Centennial Appreciation of a Jewish Modernist

By Emily Wigod Pincus

To claim Hugo Weisgall as “one of our own”, a Jewish composer, might seem problematic to some. Not much has been written on Weisgall in the context of Jewish music. Unlike many other Jewish composers, he did not attempt to compose a complete musical service until quite late in life. More importantly, he rarely attempted to incorporate “Jewish tunes” or *nusah ha-t’fillah*, even into the music he composed that others might specifically designate as “Jewish.” His style has been considered a fusion of non-tonal neoclassicism with certain influences from the Second Viennese School, such as Alban Berg. In terms of style, Weisgall described his own approach thus:

Generally my music is considered complex... It is texturally thick and multifarious; rhythmically disparate; and [it] has harmonic lines that move all on their own. It is what is commonly called atonal, but it is not non-melodic.¹

Indeed, although he was chairman of the cantorial program at the Jewish Theological Seminary for over forty years, according to its archivist, the Seminary has nothing in its archives on Weisgall. “As you know,” he wrote me, “he (Weisgall) was mostly a secular composer” (Interestingly, much of the information for this paper was received through the Milken Archive, also an arm of the Jewish Theological Seminary.) Many have observed that he seemed to keep his classical music world and his Jewish role completely separate.

There is an explicit assumption of assimilation here. In *Bloch, Schoenberg and Bernstein*, David Schiller examines the topic of assimilation in Jewish art music of the 20th Century. He observes that simply by being in a concert genre, Jewish music assimilates into Western tradition.² This means that any

1 Neil W. Levin (2006), Program Notes for Hugo Weisgall’s *Esther* [Recorded by Julia Gondek, Ted Christopher, Seattle Symphony; Gerard Schwarz, conductor] in *Jewish Operas, Volume 2* [CD recording 8.559450]. Canada, Naxos. [CD recording LC 05537] New York, Milken Archive of American Jewish Music.

2 David Schiller, *Bloch, Schoenberg and Bernstein* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2003: 3.

piece of Jewish art music “assimilates” to a certain extent. He recognizes that having the definition of Jewish music include the contribution of the Jewish composer within surrounding non-Jewish society can be problematic because “the notion of art music is alien to a communal tradition in which music and prayer are linked.”³ Also, in considering a Jewish American composer, one needs to consider how not just Jewish music but also Judaism itself affect the composer’s body of work. One needs to consider how secular cultural and political context affect a composer with deep European roots—e.g., text, language and social structure—and how does this then shape Jewish music.⁴ How does one become part of the American collectivity without giving up Jewish identity?⁵

On the subject of his Jewish identity, Weisgall says,

There was never any question of the fact that I was Jewish. The degree to which that colors my life has probably changed over the course of the years. But I think the line has consistently been that I don’t feel a conflict between my Jewishness and anything else, that’s the point. I was always able to function Jewishly in my own way, without ever feeling any conflict. I don’t... though I sometimes used to laugh and say, “Gee I wish I were part of the majority,” but I knew perfectly well that I didn’t mean that. But... there is no conflict that I feel, that I am aware of. Now, I do find it strange that I perhaps am not making more Jewish works, the way so many of my colleagues have. But I just haven’t. I haven’t written that many works. And if someone asks me, “What are your Jewish works?” I say, “well, practically everything I do is Jewish, because I’m ipso facto Jewish.” That’s all... I’ve never had a quarrel with it, I’ve never blamed my lack of success or misfortune on the fact that I was Jewish.⁶

Weisgall considered his work to be Jewish because he was a Jew. However, he did not compose much “Jewish music.” The reason he avoided writing more works for synagogue is that he knew his style was not likely to be accepted, and his sense of identity was too strong to be compromised. One interviewer described the problem:

He has done some psalm settings, but, he points out ruefully, “That’s commercial stuff which unfortunately doesn’t get sold. I’d like to do a big

3 *Ibid.*, 3.

4 *Ibid.*, 4.

5 *Ibid.*, 5.

6 Neil W. Levin, “Hugo Weisgall Interview,” with the participation of Deborah and Jonathan Weisgall, 1995, video transcript, Milken Family Foundation, Santa Monica California.

synagogue service, but I won't write it unless someone commissions it and guarantees a performance, because my music isn't that easy.⁷

Albert Weisser observed that there was a universal plane in Weisgall's non-Jewish works: death, alienation, terror, anxiety, fear and trembling, moral desolation, which finds special force when viewed as the Jewish condition in the first half of the Twentieth Century.⁸ Indeed, the concept of "creative alienation" as a specifically Jewish response to modern times had been developed by Eugene Borowitz. He described the American Reform Jews of the 1960s as "no longer infatuated with the mode of the American 'melting pot.'" He defined creative alienation as implying "sufficient withdrawal from our society to judge it critically, but also the will and flexibility to keep finding and trying ways of correcting it... Jewishness offers a unique means of maintaining such creative alienation."⁹

For Weisgall, Modernism, in both form and content, was the technique by which he achieved creative alienation. "Modernism" has had a long and varied history, but almost all of its different incarnations could apply to Weisgall. The term started in the 19th Century with Richard Wagner, who coined the term to say that music has a purpose beyond itself in direct contrast to a definition of "modern" as "a cheap concession to popular and philistine taste." Modernist art had a redemptive quality that countered what Wagner defined as "modern"—those who try to exploit the spiritually corrupt aspects of modern life. Modernism at mid-19th century gained a new sense: to signify the revolutionary avant garde that rejects historical models and tries to penetrate beyond the surface—experimenting with form, tonality and orchestration to evoke new qualities of contemporary culture and society.¹⁰

In the 20th Century, Modernism came to imply that art reflects the logic of history. What is novel becomes dominant, but then is ultimately superceded, so that success with an established audience is not a criterion of aesthetic merit. Normative expectations regarding beauty in sound and timbre and

7 "Composer Scores Esther Back to Life at City Opera", *The Forward*, December 6, 1993, p. 19.

8 Albert Weisser, "Jewish Music in Twentieth Century America: Four Representative Figures" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation., The Jewish Theological Seminary of America), 1980:1-2.

9 Eugene Borowitz, *The Masks Jews Wear: The Self-Deceptions of American Jewry* (New York: Simon and Schuster), 1973:209.

10 Leon Botstein, "Modernism, §1; Origins", *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press), 2007; available from <http://www.grovemusic.com/shared/views/article.html?section=music.40625.1>; Internet.

meaning in musical expression were confronted. Alternatives to tonality were explored. The typical audience was seen as addicted to art as comforting entertainment and affirmation, unable and unwilling to confront the transformative power and ethical character of true musical art. Especially after WWI there was a deepened impulse to use art for protest and criticism. Artists explicitly distorted traditional expectations to create an art that responded to the irrationality and cruelty of contemporary life.¹¹

Here is a comparison between what Weisgall says about Modernism, and how David Schiller presents it. In response to a question, about how he defines Modernism, Weisgall says:

It's not romantic. Romantic in the traditional 19th-century sense of the word. It takes into account what has gone on in the 20th century—the violence, the hatred, the extreme [ideologies]... I can go down the list. [My opera] *The Tenor* has this insane quality of a man killing his mistress or of the man's mistress dying. Then he steps over [her] and goes out. Now that's one bit of violence that occurs only at the end, but it does color the whole work.¹²

So here Weisgall sees Modernism in contrast to what has gone before it. Schiller presents Modernism as defined by Jean-François Lyotard: "Nostalgic aesthetic of the sublime—the unrepresentable put forth only as the missing contents, but the form because of its recognizable consistency continues to offer the listener solace or pleasure."¹³ For example, as a Modernist work, Schoenberg's *Survivor from Warsaw* has formal presentation (adherence to twelve-tone structure) and an inherently unrepresentable subject—the Holocaust. Similarly, In Weisgall's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, the characters discuss the unrepresentability of their own subject matter (incest, prostitution, child murderers, etc.) in a work that could at times be described as beautiful.

By contrast, Postmodernism puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation, but "denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable." A case in point would be Leonard Bernstein's *Kaddish*, where he disrupts

11 Leon Botstein, "Modernism, § 3: Aesthetic Aspects", *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press), 2007; available from <http://www.grovemusic.com/shared/views/article.html/section=music.40625.3>.

12 Interview with Hugo Weisgall.

13 Schiller, p. 6, citing Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*, (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press), 1979.

“good form” by mixing conventions in order to refer to the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the Holocaust in the same breath.¹⁴

So Weisgall insists on the grandeur of Modernism whereas Bernstein seems to be saying that grand statements can no longer be made. And this seems to apply to the way Weisgall saw his Judaism:

Now, certainly, I am not what is normally called an observant Jew. I am, however, a very committed Jew, and I find that a great strength. And a large source of that which I do as a human being is that Jewishness. Now, what it is besides tradition, tolerance? It's a commitment, it's an acceptance of 5,000 years of Jewish history that I have voluntarily taken upon myself, and which I feel.¹⁵

Not surprisingly, “strength,” “grandeur” and “persistence” are terms that critics have applied to his operas:

At a time when post-modernist taste is dominant and nostalgia and eclecticism rule, Mr. Weisgall's uncompromising modernism, his acidic melancholy and muscular dissonances make a compelling case for difficult music used for difficult purposes... [*Esther's* score's] power is unmistakable.¹⁶

It is generally felt that he has never received the recognition he is due. In all probability this is because of the style to which he has adhered for his entire career—a steely, uncompromising atonality... Weisgall's undoubted dramatic sense and the fluidity of his writing do contribute to a musical flow which, if hieratic rather than immediate, suffuses the score with a sort of brilliance that is both bracing and uplifting.¹⁷

Schiller talked about the musicians he studied in their relationship to the Holocaust and how it determined their form. He says that with *A Survivor from Warsaw*, Schoenberg linked the survival of modernism with Jewish survival after the Holocaust. Certainly, the Holocaust did not define Weisgall as a Jew, but it did stimulate a resurgence of his activity as a composer to Jewish texts, particularly with *The Golden Peacock*. When he wrote *The Golden Peacock*, a classical setting of well-known Yiddish folk songs, it was in order not to give Hitler a posthumous victory—he wanted this repertoire

14 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

15 Interview with Hugo Weisgall.

16 Edward Rothstein, “*Esther Lives in Modern Musical Terms*” in *The New York Times*, December 11, 1993, p. 30.

17 P.J.S., “A Christmas Wreath,” *Opera News*, December 25, 1993.

and its nostalgic longing for a legendary past—to survive through him. Thus the act of harmonizing Yiddish tunes in a modernist style in a post-modern, post-Holocaust period, argued for the survival of both.

Weisgall had derided the concept that using “Jewish” elements, like taking tunes from a Jewish anthology, necessarily made a piece “Jewish.” A composer could take a “Jewish” element, but in order for a piece to be Jewish, it had to be qualitatively good. In Weisgall’s case, it was his perspective itself that helped define his music as Jewish.

Hugo Weisgall’s work and life were deeply imbued with a sense of Jewish identity and music. He was the son of a famous cantor and descended from a line of many others. He had spent his youth in synagogue choir, and for much of his life was music director of a synagogue. He was perfectly capable of performing as *ba’al t’filah* in a Conservative service and did so on many occasions. Yet even in his works for synagogue and on Jewish texts, he rarely used any recognizably “Jewish” elements.

Because of this, Weisgall’s music is defined as “assimilated. One can assimilate into a larger culture, thereby losing one’s identity. Assimilation has, in general, been regarded by Jews as a bad thing—at the extreme, there is total absorption within the host culture, Judaism disappears, and assimilation is thus considered a partner in the Holocaust.

David Schiller notes that A.Z. Idelsohn considered the assimilationist tendencies in Jewish music to be an attack on Judaism. Idelsohn felt the Western music was “corrupting Jewish music.”¹⁸ On the other hand, Hannah Arendt had said that a Jewish cultural atmosphere would be inconceivable without an amalgam of old traditions with new awareness.¹⁹ Schiller observed that once the drama of assimilation was over, so would be the story of a uniquely creative and original Jewish role.²⁰

Hugo Weisgall used the technique of Modernism to employ the language of Western classical music in a new way, influenced by his understanding as a human being and a Jew. What Hugo Weisgall said musically required the acrid subjects he chose and his difficult, at times quasi-atonal style. He refused to make his music more palatable, because this did not correspond with his vision. Life in the Twentieth Century had revealed some terrible things about human nature, and terrible things had happened to the Jews. Hugo Weisgall chose to express this through his music. He was a staunch Modernist.

18 Schiller, p. 8.

19 *Idem.*

20 *Ibid.*, 11.

As observed previously, David Schiller had argued that Arnold Schoenberg re-asserted Modernism after WWII and managed to identify the survival of the Jews after the Holocaust with the survival of Modernist aesthetics.²¹ In a similar way, Weisgall remained true to his Modernist impulse throughout his life, and explicitly linked it with Judaism. In the earlier part of his long career, he would be accused of being too advanced and then in the latter half of being too dated. It was a tough row to hoe. In a letter written in 1963 he was quoted as saying:

All that I can honestly say is that it's a damn tough job, writing music. I suppose it always has been... I try to do the best I can at all times. I think I am as self-critical as one can be and yet continue writing.²²

Fortunately this did not stop him from creating a small body of Jewish music that is sincere, erudite and illustrative of the challenge to faith in the Twentieth Century.

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This article is excerpted with the author's permission from her Masters thesis, "Hugo Weisgall-A Jewish Modernist," completed in 2008 upon her graduation from The School of Sacred Music at Hebrew Union College in New York.

21 *Ibid.*, 6.

22 Interview with Hugo Weisgall.

Tales from the Choir Loft: A Former “*Vimalei Boy*” Remembers

By Solomon Mendelson

By the age of eight I was singing professionally in synagogue choirs. Friends who’ve heard recordings on which I appeared at that time tell me that it was pure enough to sound like a soprano, later it acquired an unmistakably vibrant alto quality. They called me “Tucky”—as in the Mother Goose nursery rhyme—Little Tommy Tucker, sing for your supper. That was literally true in the mid-to-late 1940s, because in those years synagogue choirs were all business. Young Jewish servicemen were returning home from their military duty and marrying the sweethearts they had left behind. In still traditionally-minded New York City, that meant a huge number of weddings taking place in kosher catering halls, since the largely Orthodox synagogues were built a generation or more earlier by a community that had never anticipated the need for social halls large enough to accommodate affairs involving hundreds of invited guests.

The house caterers at so-called wedding “Palaces” made arrangements with well-known cantors who in turn had their own deals with popular choir directors. The directors constantly needed fresh unchanged voices to augment their basses and tenors in performing the SATB choral accompaniments prayers and hymns sung at nuptial ceremonies. The cantors-and-choirs were offered as a package to bridal parties shopping for suitably attractive venues. In New York State, cantors had been granted official status as “Ministers of the Jewish Faith” a century before, and were therefore empowered to officiate at weddings, whereas in many other states that privilege was reserved for rabbis.

With cantors accompanied by large male choirs having become effective selling points, the less money that choir directors were forced to pay singers, the more profit they made. Reliable basses and tenors—mostly opera singers moonlighting on weekends—demanded and received legitimate compensation. However, the parents of Hebraically literate boy sopranos and altos, mostly yeshiva students, had no idea what their vocally gifted offspring’s services were worth. Choir directors habitually played this advantage to the hilt.

In my case, choir director Reuven Kazimirsky—whose sole conducting technique consisted of repeating in a gravelly baritone: *nokh amol* (“once more”)—had gotten away with paying me peanuts for a whole year. We were scheduled to help conduct services at a hotel in the Catskills for the following High Holidays and, just before rehearsals were to begin, my mother asked Kazimirsky how much I would receive. He breezily answered, “the air is good up there,” and that marked the end of my association with him.

Despite the fact that I didn't get to the mountains that year, the move to Sam Sterner's choir proved a step up for my career as a *m'shoreir*. Sterner's was a better choir, so much so that its boys sported a snottily superior attitude whenever they met those who sang in other choirs. Once I joined Sterner, I too enjoyed that particular social benefit. On the subway ride home after a particular Saturday night wedding, we ran into kids our own age from Meyer Machtenberg's choir, and beat the stuffing out of them.

I also discovered that I wasn't the only *m'shoreir* in New York who'd been given a personalized nickname, Sam Sterner coined one for almost every boy in several choirs that made the nuptial rounds under his name (if he appeared personally to conduct, the charge doubled). He never called me "Tucky," preferring "Mendy" instead. David, a rather plump and rotund soprano, he crowned "Pumpkin." Herbie, who loved to hold high notes, he named *Der Langer* ("the long one"). A dapper dresser he tagged "Prince," and skinny Jackie Goldstein—a brilliant musician who went on to conduct his own choir—he dubbed "Muscles." One of the veteran basses, whose additional job was to carry the choir's robes from venue to venue, he referred to as "Joe Satchel-house."

The public knew Jan Peerce as a Metropolitan Opera star who also recorded extensively and soloed with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini. *M'shor'rim* around the city knew that he also performed locally at weddings. Sterner's choir once rehearsed with him at a Downtown catering hall where Jan's father, Reverend Perlmutter, worked as the *mashgi-akh* (kashruth supervisor). I remember Peerce telling us kids during a break never to stop practicing. "I'm still taking lessons," he said, even though I know more about singing than my teacher does. "So," we asked him, "why do you keep on paying for lessons?" He replied: "Because he can hear me better than I could ever hear myself!"

Peerce wasn't the only top-flight musician that we sang with—or on one occasion—sang for. Alexander Olshanetsky and Joseph Rumshinsky, two of the most popular composers for the Yiddish stage, were notoriously jealous of each other's success. Yet when Olshanetsky died in 1946 and Rumshinsky was asked to direct the music at his funeral, the public would never have guessed that they were bitter rivals. The choir chosen was the one that Olshanetsky had led at the Concord Resort in Kiamesha Lake, New York on Festivals and High Holidays. Sam Sterner "loaned" me to the Concord Choir for those *Yom tov* services, and Yiddish film star Moishe Oysher served as cantor.

Thousands of Lower East Side Jews turned out for Olshanetsky's funeral service, held at the Second Avenue Theatre where he had entertained them for decades. Afterwards, the choir filed out and led people in a parade down

2nd Avenue in tribute to the beloved maestro whose career had been cut short prematurely at age 50, Rumshinsky conducting as we marched. I was right next to him as he cried like a baby, leading us in Olshanetsky's hit song *Ikh hob dikh tsu fiel lieb*—known in English as “I Love You Much Too Much” (lyrics by Chaim Tauber, from the Yiddish play *Di katerinchik*—The Organ Grinder—1934).

By then I was a good enough alto soloist to become Sterner's official “*Vimalei Boy*” at weddings, and even to be farmed out to other choir leaders occasionally, for a hefty commission. The official title meant that I would walk slowly down the aisle just before the cantor began his opening *Borukh ha-bo* (“Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord”) for the groom, singing *Vimalei mish'aloseinu b'midoh tovoh y'shu'oh v'rakhamim* (“May God fulfill our requests in good measure, for salvation and mercy”). I would be decked out in a white yarmulke and gown—as opposed to the rest of the choir in black—with both arms raised as if blessing the bride and groom as I solemnly approached them under the *khuppah*. Singing steadily in my brightest tone while the choir supplied background harmonies underneath, I looked like a small Priest before the Temple's Altar, entirely appropriate since I happen to be a *kohein*.

Which reminds me of the many times in synagogue—particularly Temple Beth El of Borough Park, Brooklyn, where I spent most of career as a *m'shoreir*—when we led the congregational refrain in between the Priestly Benediction's three verses on *Yamim nora'im* and *Shalosh r'galim*. I was taught not to look at *kohanim* during this ritual. But from our perch up in the choir loft we could not see them as they stood before the Ark below. The only people visible to us were the men of the congregation (women occupied balconies set at an angle to us). The striking image that has remained with me to this day is how much the men—with large *taleisim* completely covering their heads and bodies so as not to see the *kohanim*—resembled an ocean of whitecaps when viewed from the top of the ferris wheel at Steeplechase Park in Coney Island!

When all is said and done, it was really my mother who made me into a hazzan. Like most youngsters who grew up in Borough Park during the 1940s, I would have preferred playing punchball in the streets to singing in a choir. My mom, however—who had a beautiful singing voice herself—spotted whatever God-given talent I had, took me by the hand and led me to the Grand Mansion catering hall to audition for the manager.

My theory—and I'm not the first to propose it—is that anyone who's ever sung in or had anything to do with a *shul* choir always retains a certain con-

nectedness to *Yiddishkeit*. David Sarnoff, who founded the National Broadcasting Company and headed RCA, wrote of this from his own experience. I'm convinced of it through personal knowledge. Ronald Skolnick, who sang in my choir at Congregation Beth Sholom of Long Beach, NY during his childhood, is currently President of the United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism. In his acceptance speech he said: "It was Hazzan Mendelson's influence that led to my becoming active in synagogue work."

Looking back with a certain amount of professional pride upon the years I spent in the *M'shoreir* School of Hard Knocks, I readily admit that I was far from being the only alto who regularly walked down a crisply laundered white carpet at catered weddings, singing *Vimalei* to the star-struck couple. Every synagogue choir in New York City featured at least one of my kind on any given evening, and often several, to cover multiple affairs being held simultaneously. The most outstanding among my competitors was undoubtedly Jackie Goldstein, whom I mentioned earlier in connection with the nickname "Muscles" that Sam Sterner bestowed upon him. Jackie was only six months older than me, but displayed a flair for musical leadership that went beyond his years.

His high alto voice alone would have made him a standout, but his early grasp of every composition's over-all structure—plus his pianistic facility—drew people to him. He would later go on to organize and conduct his own choir, to serve as a congregational cantor and to arrange brilliantly for all kinds of ensembles, including instrumental groups. He passed away much too soon, leaving his daughter—Amy Goldstein Faiman, an operatic soprano in Westchester, NY, and his son Martin, a CA member and hazzan in Denver, CO—to carry forward the Eastern European *khorskul* tradition he lovingly taught them as children.

Hazzan Solomon Mendelson, who sang as a youngster with Cantors Berele Chagy, Moishe Oysher, Leibele Waldman and Leib Glantz, went on to receive nine Solomon Shechter Awards for visionary programming at Congregation Beth Sholom in Long Beach, NY during a forty-five year career there. Active in the Cantors Assembly even longer, he has served it in virtually every capacity, including President, Programming Chair and Editorial Board member of its Journal. The many new musical works that he commissioned have greatly influenced the way we pray in Conservative synagogues. His article, "The Birth of an Idea—Commissioning Music for Cantor and Trained Choir," appeared in JSM 2005, and he helped compile the memorial list of European hazzanim murdered by the Nazis—"Ishei yisrael u-t'fillatam"—that appeared in JSM 2011.

Roman Cycowski (1900-1998)—A Hazzan Remembered

By Julius Blackman and Robert S. Scherr

Shabbat mornings, the sanctuary of San Francisco's Congregation Beth Israel in the 1960s afforded the authors of this remembrance a consistently remarkable worship experience. The high-domed ceiling, the balcony that completely encircled the sanctuary, a beautiful organ and marble surfaces adorned with wooden carvings from an earlier age lent an impressive grandeur to the proceedings. On the high *bimah*, Hazzan Roman Cycowski offered a classical service supported by eight singers of the highest quality. He sang in a powerful yet alluring lyrical baritone, negotiated coloratura effortlessly and displayed superb musicianship. He shared these stellar qualities unstintingly with us. We were not just disciples in the professional sense, but close friends as well

Had we been born several decades earlier, in one of the centers of Jewish life in pre-World War I Poland, we might have heard Roman Cycowski as the boy alto whose solos in the choirs of Gershon Sirota and Zeidl Rovner in Lodz, Poland, represented peak moments of the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services for a packed synagogue. Born at the beginning of the 20th century, Cycowski grew up in a Hasidic family that was also scholarly, imbued with both piety and learning, in a tradition that he adored. He also inherited a love for music from his father, an excellent *ba'al t'fillah*. Roman's exceptional vocal talent soon led to his becoming a highly regarded soloist in the choir.

His innate musicality led to his being appointed leader of Sirota's 70-voice choir in Warsaw's Tlomacki Synagogue, at the age of 17. To avoid being drafted to serve as cannon fodder in the Russian and German armies' brutal back-and-forth fighting over Poland, Cycowski fled to Germany. There he began to study music formally, first at the Breslau Conservatory, and then at the Academy of Music in Berlin. During his student years he often served as hazzan for congregations in Berlin and Dresden. By the early 1920s, he was also attracting notice in small parts on the operatic stage, and that was where his career seemed to be heading.

In 1928 he spotted an intriguing advertisement in a show-business journal, placed by a young entrepreneurial singer, Harry Frommerman. The latter—son of a cantor—wanted to start a singing group which would rival the innovative American group, *The Revelers*. Encouraged by his colleague Robert Biberti to join this new group as their baritone, Cycowski immediately found a key place among the six young singers because of his exacting sense of pitch, wide range, and easy-going personality. The group, known as The

Comedian Harmonists, earned a worldwide reputation by the early 1930s, that filled concert halls and sold out large theaters from Berlin to Sydney to Paris to Buenos Aires, and turned their recordings into top-sellers.

Erich Collin and Ari Leschnikoff were the Comedian Harmonists' tenors, Cycowsky and Frommerman sang baritone, Robert Biberti was the bass and Erwin Bootz provided piano accompaniment. They presented a remarkable repertoire that included classical, jazz and popular music of the day, instrumental mimicking, and arrangements so complex that their sound was acclaimed by all who heard them. Roman was acknowledged by the members—all possessors of sizeable egos—as not only their vocal coach, but also as their peace-keeper!

He had planned to stay with the Harmonists for three years only, in order to gain some financial stability, and then return to the opera career that awaited him. The dark cloud of Hitlerism quickly cast a shadow on that plan. The Harmonists were forced to disband; Nazi Germany would not tolerate such stardom for a group that included three Jews. After a while, members of the group reshaped themselves into two entities. One ensemble—all Gentiles—continued in Germany, while the Jewish members formed a second troupe that was promoted by impresario Sol Hurok. Neither one ever duplicated the huge success of the original group. When Roman learned that his father had been brutally murdered by the Nazis, he felt it was time to fulfill a promise he had made, that someday he would become a hazzan. That day had arrived, and so he ended any dreams he had harbored for a stage career, and turned his talents toward pursuing his original love of *hazzanut*.

Roman and his wife Mary settled in Los Angeles in the early 1940s, where he assumed a pulpit at the Western Jewish Institute, Shaarey Tefila. At the time, cantors in Los Angeles included Leib Glantz at Sinai Temple, Julius Blackman at the Valley Jewish Community Center and Nathan Katzman at Beth El. During that era, the *Khazonim Farband*—Jewish Ministers Cantors Association—had evolved to include non-Orthodox colleagues, and its local branch came to be called the Cantors-Ministers Association of California. One must remember that in the 1940s, California was truly the wild west, and the formation of a professional organization of *hazzanim* represented quite a milestone! A few years later, this organization formed the basis of the West Coast Region of the newly-created Cantors Assembly of America.

Cycowski functioned as Musical Director of the Association during his years in Los Angeles. He was also offered a film role by the daughter of movie producer Louis B. Mayer, but he turned it down. Once he had decided to abandon the stage in favor of the synagogue pulpit, he never again considered

himself a popular performer. In the mid-1940s—as Sinai Temple sought him (even while Leib Glantz was still their cantor)—Cycowski was contacted by Beth Israel Congregation in San Francisco, considered to be the foremost Conservative synagogue in the city. The opportunity to serve in a position with professional choir, organ, and a distinguished rabbi (Elliot Burstein), drew him to San Francisco.

Cycowski's 25 years of service to Beth Israel would be filled with notable achievements. He brought distinguished Jewish musical personalities to the community, and came to know ones who were already there. Darius Milhaud was then teaching across the Bay in Oakland at Mills College, and attended Roman's performance of his *Service Sacré* for Shabbat.

In 1954 Cycowski commissioned Abraham Binder to write a cantata in commemoration of the tercentenary of Jewish life in America. He also introduced such distinguished composers as Paul Discount, Max Helfman and Solomon Ancis to the Bay Area Jewish community. Among other major events was a commission to Israeli composer Marc Lavry to create a cantata, *Queen Esther*. The premier performance took place at the War Memorial Opera House with the San Francisco Symphony, the Symphony chorus, and Cycowski singing the role of Mordechai. Later in the 1950s there took place a notable television broadcast of a *S'lihot* service from Beth Israel, presenting their magnificent repertoire of High Holiday choral music. He also was called upon by local survivors of the Shoah to chant *Tehillim* and *Eil malei rahamim* at their first-ever memorial gathering.

When Roman retired in 1971, he made plans to move to the quiet of Palm Springs for his golden years. However, his well-known presence in the Southern California community soon brought a call to serve Temple Isaiah as hazzan. He could not refuse, and continued to daven with distinction well into his 90s, earning the enduring love and admiration of the Palm Springs Jewish community.

As the authors' professional mentor, Roman thoroughly imbued us with the understanding that davening is not about the music only. "Not just black notes on a white page," he would say, "but the words that link you and your congregation to the *Ribono shel olam*." One had to address the notes, but ever more so the texts, with all one's heart and soul. Roman was a tremendously successful performer. But he more highly valued his singing at the *amud*, and never failed to let people know that the second half of his life brought his most important accomplishments and sense of personal fulfillment.

He died in November of 1998 at the age of 97, having lived a most remarkable life. His days were filled with the fear of Heaven and a pious sense of

gratitude to God, with an unconditional love of humankind and unbounded appreciation for the day he was living. Roman Cycowski, a most elegant singer, brought personal sweetness and joy to his service as *sh'liah tsibbur* for his synagogue, his community and the Jewish people at large. Many artists would have been crushed by the loss of a career such as the one that was terminated by Hitler. "That was then, but today I am glad to be a hazzan," was essential to Roman's outlook on life for the next 50 years.

He once told a young Robert Scherr: "If you become a hazzan, you will have everything—people will admire you for helping them to pray, for keeping alive our musical heritage, and for taking your place among the distinguished people who have created this profession. There is no better career!"

Julius Blackman helped found the West Coast Region of the Cantors Assembly, and served it in various leadership capacities during a career of over six decades. He held cantorial positions in Los Angeles, Palm Springs and San Francisco. For almost four decades, he served as Executive Director of the Hebrew Free Loan of San Francisco.

Robert S. Scherr was a full-time hazzan for 35 years prior to his retirement from Temple Israel of Natick in 2005. He has served on the Cantors Assembly's Executive Council and is currently its Director of Placement and Human Resources. He is also the Jewish Chaplain for Williams College in Williamstown, MA.



The Comedian Harmonists at the height of their international fame, ca. 1930; Roman Cycowski is third from the right.

Secular Jewish Musical Expression—Is Nothing Sacred?

By *Hankus Netsky*

When I first heard your Shnirele Perele on Rhythm and Jews, no kidding, it changed my life, oy so gorgeous, so sexy, so full of August Mystery, I decided to reinvent the kind of Jew I am upon hearing it... I want to be both a God believing Jew and a historical materialist socialist humanist agnostic... Hebrew and Yiddish-illiterate, I barely know how to pray; riddled with ambivalence, child of Marx, Freud, Mahler, Benjamin, Kafka, Goldman, Luxemburg, Trotsky, An-ski, Schoenberg, mongrel product of Judaism's and of Jewish exteriority, of its ghetto hungry curiosity, of its assimilationist genius, I now approach Judaism as Jews once approached the splendid strangeness of the *Goyishe Velt*: I am shall we say deeply confused, but not complacent. And this I think of course is profoundly Jewish.¹

In this excerpt from the CD booklet for the Klezmatics' *Possessed*, maverick playwright and director Tony Kushner expresses a sentiment not at all uncommon these days, especially among American baby-boomer secular Jews. Never mind that the mystical Messianic song he refers to, *Shnirele Perele* ("String of Pearls") is considered by most actual present-day Hasidim to be a children's song, or that its origin was actually as a populist outcry against the "Shnirele Perele," the rich and powerful of the nineteenth-century eastern-European Jewish community.² In its current incarnation, the song has become the "We Will Rock You" of the klezmer revival, sung by swaying Jewish crowds at Klezkamp, massive non-Jewish crowds at European Jewish music festivals, and Yiddish choruses worldwide.

It has taken its place alongside a large body of sacred repertoire: Hasidic nigunim from Breslov, Satmar, Lubavitch, and Modzitz, cantorials from Golden-age icons including Pinchik, Kwartin, Karniol and Sirota, Kabbalistic chants from the Zohar and settings of psalms, all of which are now routinely sung, sampled, riffed upon and freely programmed alongside folksongs and klezmer tunes as integral components of secular concert and recorded presentations. Peretz's famous story, *A Gilgul fun a Nign* ("the metamorphosis of a melody") has come full circle—these days no metamorphosis is necessary on the melody's part. The secular community itself has taken the journey, and their identity, as twenty-first century American Jewish artists and their audience, is often every bit as complicated as what Mr. Kushner describes.

1 Klezmatics *Possessed* (Green Linnet Records, xeno 4050, 1997). The quotation comes from the liner notes by Tony Kushner.

2 Michael Wex, interview, August 2005.

We need not look too hard to find a philosophical basis for the current state of sacred-secular co-mingling. A clue might be found in the writings of Jacques Derrida, who in the late 1940s, looked for a way to describe a revival of traditional architectural elements, paving the way for “post-modernism.” One might consider the idea of “revisionism” as articulated by Harold Bloom³ or the musings of Mikhail Bakhtin, who coined the term “chronotope” to describe multiple layers of meaning attributed to particular forms of expression over time.⁴ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett links the transformation of traditional Jewish materials in modern performance to theories explaining the production of European folklore postulated by such historians as Peter Burke and E.B. Thompson: “What had been rejected as tradition would eventually emerge as heritage.”⁵ Explain it through philosophical precedent or not, use of sacred material has become a staple of contemporary secular Jewish music presentation.

A Brief History of Jewish Secular Music

The content of secular music presentation has long been a thorny issue in Jewish society. Even Maimonides had a great deal to say about its decadence.⁶ For as long as they have existed (and one can assume they predate the written references from the early middle ages), klezmerim and *badkhanim*, the traditional emissaries of such expression have occupied positions as decadent scapegoats within Jewish society, even while their presence at pivotal community celebrations, such as weddings, has always ensured them a sizable audience. In “Merrymakers and Jesters Among Jews,” E. Lifschutz explains how such performers were welcomed by the common people of hundreds of years ago as a foil to the rigorous moralistic scrutiny of the religious leadership:

3 See Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

4 Ken Hirshkop and David Shepherd, eds, *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2001), 186.

5 Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Sounds of Sensibility,” in *American Klezmer, Its Roots and Offshoots*, ed. Mark Slobin., (Berkeley: University of California Press 2002), 137.

6 Maimonides issued a six-point summary of prohibitions on music, possibly inspired by a similar proclamation attributed to Plato. He lists the potential offenses in ascending order of their magnitude: 1. Listening to a song with a secular text, whether it be in Hebrew or Arabic; 2. Listening to a song accompanied by an instrument; 3. Listening to a song whose content includes obscene language; 4. Listening to a string instrument; 5. Listening to passages played on such instruments while drinking wine; 6. Listening to the singing and playing of a woman. (Shiloah:74).

All the complaints by the rabbis and the criticism of communal leaders that weddings were being transformed from sacred events to secular gatherings, in which jest, humor, satire and dance were the most important components, were to no avail. The masses of people, yearning for amusement and frequently having to seek it outside the ghetto, seized upon a wedding as a legitimate opportunity for such amusement. Even the more prominent citizens also enjoyed a jest and a quip no less than the more humble Jew. The wedding celebration provided the Jew with practically the only opportunity for such recreation.⁷

Indeed, in European Jewish society secular performers often had to deal with three sets of restrictions: those imposed on all musicians, those imposed by the secular authorities on Jewish musicians, and those imposed on Jewish musicians by the Jews themselves. It is not surprising that such performers had trouble making a decent living. Some even converted to Christianity, so that they might find opportunities in classical or church music or seek careers as instrument builders.

Still, Jewish “secular” performers persevered and received a considerable boost in the late 1800s in Czarist Russia, where the sentiments of Jewish society finally began to tilt in their favor. This was a time when, thanks to the recent Haskalah (enlightenment), secular education had transformed the community almost overnight, an era during which many Jews came to the conclusion that, if they were to move into the modern world, they had no choice but to denounce religion as a form of unenlightened ignorance. Historian David Biale describes this moment:

Religion was the realm of the despised parents, who represented the past; secularism a necessary component of the revolutionary future. Once... Jewish Communists came to power, they staged trials of the *kheyder* (traditional European Jewish primary school), the Talmud and other institutions of traditional Jewish life. Synagogues were shut down or turned into worker’s clubs. The brutality with which Jewish Communists overturned their parents’ tables is a story not sufficiently told, or, rather, it is a story assumed to be no longer part of Jewish history. But only by understanding how the Jewish Revolution and the Russian Revolutions combined to commit patricide and matricide can we unravel one of the sources of modern Jewish secularism. For, the assault on the Jewish religion carried out primarily by Jewish revolutionaries, themselves in many cases products of the *kheyder* and yeshivah, was much more of a family affair than most of the other secular revolts that made up the Russian

7 E. Lifshutz, “Merrymakers and Jesters Among Jews.” *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science* 7, 1952, 43.

revolution... Yom Kippur balls, ostentatious violations of the Sabbath and provocative reviling of rabbinical authorities were the stock-in-trade of all the movements of Jewish Revolution, whether they aimed at a nationalist solution to the Jewish Question or a cosmopolitan one.⁸

The rejection of traditional religious institutions by many Jews created the need for new ones, “cultural” institutions that were staunchly anti-religious. Even within Zionism and Bundism, movements normally associated with a more positive Jewish identity, negative attitudes toward Orthodoxy ruled the roost, and Yiddish, the Jewish secular language, gave the creative forces of the time a voice well suited to railing against the powers that tried to maintain the status quo. Read within the context of their time, such “traditional Yiddish writers” as Mendele and Sholem Aleichem were actually revolutionary thinkers, exposing hypocrisy and religious excess at every turn. Jewish folklorists, including An-ski, Engel, Cahan, and Prilutski, actively sparred over the inclusion of religious material into their song and folklore collections.⁹

In the early twentieth century, Jewish ethnomusicologists (a newly minted species) also took sides on the issue. A. Z. Idelsohn, the dean of the movement, maintained that Jewish music was inherently intertwined with Jewish religious society, which he regarded as its only true source. He expressed this viewpoint in his seminal work, *Jewish Music in its Historical Development*:

Life as the Jew visualized it, has no room for what is commonly denominated “secular,” therefore Jewish folksongs are rooted in the sacred... Sacred song has been folk song and folk song, sacred song. Jewish folk song nestles in the shadow of religion and ethics.¹⁰

For an opposing viewpoint, one need look no further than the pronouncements of Kiev-based ethnomusicologist Moshe Beregovski, who, as a beneficiary of the 1920s Soviet system (only to be undermined by it in the late 1930s), had little use in his writings for either religious folklore or Idelsohn’s point of view. Beregovski published extraordinarily valuable volumes of klezmer tunes and Yiddish folksongs, along with ethnographic information that has become one of our only contemporary sources for understanding the secular side of early twentieth century eastern European Jewish culture, which he understandably felt had been sorely neglected by the Jewish establishment:

The zealous adherents and preservers of the liturgical musical tradition condemned Jewish secular folklore to death and did not want to believe that

8 David Biale, *God’s Language and the Making of Secular Jewish Culture*, 14.

9 Itsik Gottesman, internet communication, June 10, 2005.

10 Abraham Zvi Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in its Historical Development*. (New York: Henry Holt, 1929), 358.

this useless “Yiddish musical jargon” lay at the basis of Jewish “national music culture.” The only Jewish music worthy of “regeneration” according to the clerical Zionists (Idelsohn, et al.) was the “lofty liturgical melody.”¹¹

America’s Jews, musical and otherwise, quarreled along similar ideological lines, producing a plethora of organizations, choral societies, journals, and newspapers whose philosophical distinctions seemed trivial to outsiders and all-important to their members. To experience “secular” Jewish music in its most carefully sculpted form, one needs only to look at songbooks and choral arrangements produced in the early part of the twentieth century by such groups as the International Worker’s Organization (IWO), the Sholem Aleichem Club, and the early Workman’s Circle.¹² Here one finds a repertoire that is a far cry from the multi-layered religious/secular mix that had actually persisted in Jewish eastern Europe: lullabies that seek to educate babies in the fundamentals of the class struggle, labor movement anthems touting worker’s rights, and celebratory songs extolling brotherhood, albeit usually only among Jews; Anti-Semitism still excluded them from many mainstream workers organizations.

Secular Representations of the Sacred

One also finds religion well represented in such collections, albeit with a particular editorial spin: religion as seen through the lens of the “enlightened” poet. *Maskilik* (post-enlightenment) folk-poet Mikhail Gordon’s “traditional” Jews worship at the altar of whiskey and obsess about the power of their beards. Through Yiddish folk-bard Mordechai Gebirtig we meet *dovidl*, who will do anything to lure his love, *reyzele*—he even offers to feign the observant lifestyle of her mother. Kiev-based lawyer/songwriter Marek Warshavsky introduces us to elderly grandparents who endearingly perpetuate outdated customs and beliefs not shared by their children or grandchildren, even while he reminds us that within the letters of the Jewish alphabet are contained the tears and suffering of a nation.

11 Moshe Beregovski, *Old Jewish Folk Music*. Trans. and ed. by Mark Slobin. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 22. Statements such as this one led Jewish art music scholar Albert Weisser to criticize Beregovski’s work on the basis of “narrow dialectical critique and unreliable selectivity” (Weisser 1959:52). I must confess that the more I read “Jewish music studies” authors, the more such Marxist points of view resonate for me.

12 Many of these songbooks are still in print, and the repertoire continues to be perpetuated by the surviving branches of these organizations.

Meanwhile, in the alternative secular world of Yiddish theatre, Jewish religious expression finds a niche, as nostalgia (e.g. Ludvig Zatz or Seymour Rechzeit singing “Ikh Benk Aheym” (“I Long For Home”)), as parody (at the hands of such stars as Peisache Burstein, Gus Goldstein, Molly Picon and later, non-Jewish superstar Cab Calloway), as fashion statement (for example, the *kapotes* ((Hassidic coats)) worn by such concert-klezmer outfits as Joseph Cherniavsky’s Yiddish-American Jazz Band) or as spectacle in the mainstream media (Yossele Rosenblatt on the Keith Vaudeville circuit and Leybele Waldman and Freydele Oysher on countless radio shows). In the world of Yiddish film, the tug between religion and assimilation fuels the plot time and time again.

It was the recording industry that made it possible for anyone and everyone to experience Jewish religious expression in glorious reproduction—and in a totally secular context. Large numbers of 78 RPM recordings of the great cantors found their way into homes, businesses, and even juke boxes, and enabled the immigrant community literally to use their old-country religion as background music for their transition into American mainstream society. Classic recordings of such golden-age figures as Yossele Rosenblatt and Zavel Kwartin prepared the Jewish world for the even more dramatic cantorial endeavors of Richard Tucker and Jan Peerce, not to mention the truly mainstream efforts of such non-Jewish pop music superstars as Johnny Mathis (“Eli Eli”) and Perry Como (“Kol Nidre”).

A leading figure that set the stage for the complex sacred-secular hybrid that is the Jewish music scene of today was Moishe Oysher (1907-1958). An actor whose flamboyant lifestyle challenged the boundaries of traditional Judaism as much as his gypsy-like cascades and jazzy flourishes stretched the limits of Jewish musical improvisation, Oysher began his career as a stage actor in Roumania at age six. He rose to fame in the American Jewish community for his role in Edgar G. Ulmer’s Yiddish film classic *Yankel Der Shmid* (“The Singing Blacksmith”) and, later as an extraordinary but demented cantor in *Overture to Glory*. A first-rate Jewish vocal stylist, Oysher constantly frustrated the religious authorities with his lack of regard for traditional Jewish observance, while his notoriety made him only more legendary. His duet, “Hassidic in America” (featuring Florence Weiss, his wife at the time) from the earlier film shows just how astute Oysher was in mingling Hasidic chant with the popular scat-singing craze of the day. His 1940s recordings of such selections as *Omar, omar* (“Thus Said Rabbi Elazar”) with musical direction by the innovative arranger-composer Sam Medoff, offered a prototype for languid cantorial improvisation over a driving rhythm, an innovation other-

wise ignored in Jewish music until it was re-introduced as a signature sound of the Middle Eastern World Beat revolution of the 1990s.

Shlomo Carlebach and Hasidic Music for the Masses

If Oysher created a template for outside-the-box cantorials, it was Shlomo Carlebach (1925-1994) who found his own way to bring Hasidic spirit back to the Jewish masses. Emanating from a long line of Orthodox German rabbis, Carlebach began his career as an outreach emissary for the Lubavitch movement from 1951 until 1955, eventually splitting with the Lubavitcher leadership over the issue of inclusion of women in prayer. After three years on his own, he decided to take up the guitar, recording his first album of new compositions in 1959. A breakthrough appearance at the Berkeley Folk Festival in 1966 enabled him to create the “House of Love and Prayer,” arguably the first “New Age” synagogue, in San Francisco and, later, the Carlebach Shul in New York City. His open friendship with practitioners of various Eastern religions and his contemporary outlook on love and spirituality drew in both observant and non-observant followers all over the world while drawing the scorn of others with a less open outlook. His endeavors laid the groundwork for a wide network of “Holy Brothers” who embraced “Carlebach Judaism” as a viable pathway to contemporary enlightenment. It was Carlebach, along with Jewish renewal pioneer Zalman Schachter Shlomi that created a brand of Hasidic-style mysticism and spirituality that Jews with any level of observance could feel good about embracing. Their work was arguably a throwback to the radical democratization of traditional religious practice sought by the movement’s eighteenth-century founders.

The Jewish Cultural Revolution of the 1950s and its Aftermath

If Hasidism and *khazonus* (the cantorial tradition) weathered the litmus test of the 1950s and 60s, many other aspects of Eastern European Jewish culture did not. In the assimilationist world of postwar America, one could easily argue that Jewish educators set about to deliberately dismantle the thousand-year-old cultural infrastructure inherited from the eastern European community, replacing it in a matter of a few years with a newly constructed modern Jewish persona where the past was the Bible and the Holocaust—and the only future was the new homeland in the Middle East. In his preface to *The Songs We Sing*, a landmark educational songbook, published in 1950 by the Conservative movement, editor Harry Coopersmith announced the new agenda:

The rise of the Nationalist Movement, culminating, at long last, in the establishment of the State of Israel, the upsurge of religious feeling, especially during the war years, an awakened concern on the part of educators and parents for the development of an integrated Jewish personality through a curriculum providing for emotional as well as intellectual growth—these are the forces most responsible for this renewed outpouring of a rich and variegated folk and art song.¹³

Coopersmith's influential volume, which included compositions by Leonard Bernstein, Isidore Freed, Herbert Fromm and Judith Kaplan Eisenstein (daughter of Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan, the architect of the Reconstructionist movement), and arrangements by Darius Milhaud and Kurt Weill, offered a presumed esthetic upgrade to Jewish children growing up in mainstream Jewish society in the two decades that followed. Unfortunately, in doing so, it made quick work of paving over the actual cultural inheritance of the vast majority of America's Jews: music with deep roots in eastern Europe.

Sooner or later, however, for a younger generation craving something that resonated a bit more with their gut instincts and their grandparents', the artificial kibbutz and concert hall veneer wore pretty thin. As Yale University English professor William Deresiewicz wrote in a recent book review in "The Nation:"

My own experience tells me that American Judaism has long been beset by a deep sense of banality and inauthenticity. To the usual self-contempt of the liberal middle class is added the feeling that genuine Jewish life is always elsewhere: in Israel or the shtetl, among the immigrant generation or the ultra-Orthodox. Jewish culture as lived by the non-Orthodox tends to feel bland and thin even to its practitioners.¹⁴

New York-based writer Rachel Kafirissen echoes these sentiments while summing up the perspective of many current American Jewish cultural activists in her "Jewish Cultural Manifesto," published in the November-December 2005 issue of *Jewish Currents*, a publication that has long positioned itself as the voice of America's secular Jewish movement:

...to grow up Jewish in assimilated America is to absorb a world of cultural confusion. The Jewish history I learned in Hebrew school moved pretty quickly from the ancient land of Israel to the modern state of Israel, with brief, terrifying stops between 1939 and 1945. As you can imagine, the official erasure of our sojourn in Europe creates a bit of an identity crisis in the average young Jew... even before I spoke one word of Yiddish, the

13 Harry Coopersmith, *The Songs We Sing* (New York: The United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education, 1950).

14 William Deresiewicz, "The Imaginary Jew" in *The Nation*, May 25, 2007.

language itself was talking to me, telling me that there was more to being a Jew than the empty signifiers, and emptier materialism, of the modern Jewish suburb.¹⁵

In embracing the American incarnation of eastern European Jewish culture as her own locus, Kafrissen recognizes that the positioning of religious versus secular in mainstream Jewish media is perhaps yet another outmoded, even entirely artificial, creation of the American Jewish establishment:

Secular and observant...are points on a common path. Neither secular nor observant are immutable characteristics, and we all know someone who's gone both ways... We all have a duty to know something about the core texts of our tradition and the languages in which they were written... Which brings me to my next point: Jewish religion cannot be divorced from Jewish culture... Turn a *shul* into a temple, a *khazn* into a cantor, Jewish music into Debbie Friedman, well you better lock the doors, cuz the inmates will be breaking out. American Jewish culture has turned Camembert into Cheez Whiz: It is boring and every young Jew knows it.¹⁶

And so, at least for certain members of the younger generation, sacred and secular, or as one would say in Yiddish, *heylik un veltlik*, have no problem co-existing on the same continuum. Rigid identities, forged in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Europe and carried over to a country of new immigrants, no longer have the momentum to stick in present day society. Today's Jews are embracing many of same aspects of their culture and history that their parents and grandparents ran away from in droves. As Steven M. Cohen and Arnold Eisen point out in *The Jew Within*, surveys of American Jews conducted at the end of the twentieth century showed that "more and more Jews during the past few decades, opposing efforts to diminish, downplay, and minimize ethnically based differences, have come to see Jewish ethnic distinctiveness in a new and more positive light."¹⁷ Instead of truly embracing the tenets of any denomination, twenty-first century Jews tell a "postmodern story of 'local narratives,' 'multiple life-worlds,' and fluid movement among commitments by fluid selves, embarked on personal journeys that never end."¹⁸

Furthermore, Hasidism, no longer the object of parody or derision, whether in Woody Allen movies, New Yorker covers, or the psyches of countless American Jews, has come to represent "authentic Judaism, the real thing, as opposed to the ersatz varieties of Judaism born of the other survival strategies

15 Rachel Kafrissen, <http://www.jewishcurrents.org/2005-nov-kafrissen.htm>.

16 Kafrissen, *ibid.*

17 Steven M. Cohen and Arnold M. Eisen, *The Jew Within*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 108.

18 *Ibid.*, 182.

employed to navigate modernity.”¹⁹ This phenomenon has paved the way for many new forms of Jewish cultural expression, not the least of which is the hybrid form of secular-religious Jewish music presentation we so often see today, one that openly embraces and even romanticizes the most traditional aspects of the religious world.

Of course, it’s also important to realize that the atmosphere in which Jewish concert presentation often takes place today is one where third-generation American Jews position their contribution as part of a larger whole, located mostly outside any ethnic or religious enclaves, as part of a folk, improvisational, and world music scene in which ghetto walls have no function. Jewish music, sacred or secular is a bona fide “heritage” music that has taken its place alongside so many other revived treasures, including New Orleans jazz, gospel, bluegrass, and Irish ceili.²⁰ Denizens of such subcultures have traditionally harbored no shortage of religious-secular hang-ups, but on the musical stage, they’ve been dealing with them for a long time. Bill Monroe and the Stanley Brothers or Sam Cooke, Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin, James Brown, Lauren Hill—all of them have shown that a culture can move from church to club at the drop of a hat—that is the American model.²¹

19 Ibid, 106.

20 Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has defined “heritage” as “a mode of cultural production that gives the disappearing and gone a second life as an exhibit of itself.”

21 In African American culture it has always been a given that religious and secular forces were merely two sides of the same coin or, in the cases of traditional spirituals, the masking of secular messages within a religious cloak. In February of 2004 I was invited to be a special guest in a concert that matched up two of Boston’s most compelling Choral groups, “A Besere Velt,” a volunteer secular Jewish chorus organized by Lisa Gallitan, director of the Boston Chapter of the Workman’s Circle, and the “New England Spiritual Ensemble,” a group of professional African American singers. The concert, entitled “At My Grandmother’s Knee” set out to find common ground in the experiences communicated through traditional Jewish and African American folksong. Of course, despite the best of liberal intentions, the pairing had its intrinsic tensions. The Spiritual Ensemble, not surprisingly, brought out spirituals, well-worn hymns about faith in Jesus and the time of redemption that he would surely bring. “A Besere Velt,” sang about, brotherhood, peace, and political struggle—for them, redemption was something for human beings to bring about, although after a few drinks on Jewish holidays, they might deign to ask for a bit of outside intervention. The controversy made for a lively topic of discussion, albeit only on the Jewish side of the fence. Most members of the dissenting group had little problem with the concert as a whole; what they objected to was the finale, which included a collaborative performance of the popular spiritual “Amen” with its story of the baby Jesus, the miracles he performed, his crucifixion and redemption, something that Jews with or without religious leaning could easily find problematic—couldn’t the chorus use other lyrics that made the song

In fact, the current metamorphosis and renaissance of Jewish music didn't happen in a vacuum. One can easily see it as a direct reflection and even an imitation of the African American roots phenomenon of the 1960s, not to mention the spiritual musical improvisation movement launched in the same era by such figures as John Coltrane, Albert Ayler, and, one might argue, The Grateful Dead.²² But the impulse that triggers musicians to jump on this particular bandwagon can lead them in extremely divergent directions. On the very same continuum, one might find Andy Statman, whose immersion in klezmer eventually led him toward an observant lifestyle, and Anthony Coleman, who brings a rich experimental musical palette to bear on traditional material. Downtown Jewish music scene guru and Klezmatics founder Frank London sums up the approaches he sees around him in the following way:

For some musicians it's an outgrowth of their secular, cultural Jewish identity, while for others it's an expression of Jewish spirituality. Some people draw pride, as I do, in the secular, social activist Yiddish song tradition, while others are drawn to mystical, trance-inducing Hasidic nigunim. Some look for that nostalgic, warm feeling, while others look for answers as large as the (meaning of the) Holocaust, or why Yiddish culture dies, or why it was killed off.²³

A major figure that cites diverse sources for his motivation, radical Jewish culture guru and recent MacArthur Foundation fellow John Zorn expresses his Jewish connection thus:

How do I come to my Jewishness? I was raised in a completely secular environment; it was an environment of total alienation and denial when it came to matters Jewish. My parents were brutal when it came to eliminating the past. I came to Jewishness by walking down very different paths... I actually came to it when I was living in Japan. There it was impossible to blend in, and I learned to value my position as "Other."²⁴

more neutral? Others saw the concert as an innocuous endorsement of pluralism, no more objectionable than a "Messiah" sing. In the end, the collaboration went through, but one member of the ensemble (a rabbi) felt compelled to resign.

22 Michael Wex has pointed out that the peripheral identification of many 1950s and 60s Jazz figures with the nation of Islam may very well have provided a prototype for the identification of secular Jewish performers with traditional north African Jewish religious imagery and even fashion (Wex, interview with Hankus Netsky, August 2005).

23 Frank London, quoted in Marcus Gammel, *Migration and Identity Politics in New York's Jewish Downtown Scene*. (Berlin: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2000), 4.

24 John Zorn quoted in Jerome Chanes, "The Artist as Outsider; the Jew as Artist: A Conversation with John Zorn." *Culture Currents*, National Foundation for Jewish Culture, May 29, 2002, 1.

For many years Zorn has flaunted Jewish religious symbolism in his work, calling his recording label “Tzadik” (the Hasidic term for a mystical religious scholar) and wearing a *tallis* as a performance outfit. He, more than any other individual has encouraged those who partake in what he has dubbed “Radical Jewish Culture” to draw on any and all possible facets of Jewish cultural expression, be it American popular music by Jewish composers (such as Burt Bacharach) or Moroccan religious chant, and, in doing so, has enabled creative musicians to shake down issues of Jewish identity on their own terms. One of his recent releases (a session led by Frank London), *khazonus* (cantorials), features a prominent Conservative cantor, Jack Mendelsohn, jamming freely with some of the downtown scene’s most creative and innovative musicians, including pianist Anthony Coleman and percussionist Gerald Cleaver.²⁵

But if secular Jews have few qualms about appropriating religious imagery, what sort of reception do their creations receive within circles of observant Jews? Actually, they receive very little notice at all—such efforts are usually entirely off the radar screens of Hasidic and Orthodox Jews, aside from occasional Jewish music list or Facebook discussion groups, or solitary Hasidim seen poking around clubs such as Makor or the Knitting Factory. Probably the most potent criticism comes from the more educated quarters of the Jewish music scene itself. Some mention gratuitous use of religious imagery that smacks of insincere commercial opportunism. Others become angry at the callous disregard for ownership of the material itself, for example when groups simply label niggunim as “traditional” when their authorship is actually widely known, perhaps with the cynical intention of collecting undeserved royalties. Still others have trouble accepting what they see as excessive sentimentalism. Yiddish scholar, award-winning author, and occasional stand-up comic Michael Wex, raised as an observant Jew, has little patience for the disengagement of such a scene from the traditions they invoke, not to mention the use of religious garb as a fashion statement:

(Identifying as a) radical Jew seems to be a way of having your cake and eating it: I am very Jewish, but don’t ask me to do anything. I’m carrying my instrument while wearing a yarmulke that looks as much like an African cap as I can get, I’ve gone to the Afro-centric store and bought one of those shirts with fringes in each corner; now it’s a tsitsis too... “Excuse me, young Jew, we need a tenth for a minion.” “Man, don’t hang me up with minions; I’ve gotta be free.” It doesn’t engage with that aspect of it. It’s more of an artistic credo.²⁶

25 Frank London, *Hazones* (Tzadik, TZ8102, 2006).

26 Michael Wex, interview with Hankus Netsky, August 2005.

He also takes issue with the problem of material being used out of context:

It's dangerous when it trivializes what the *khasidic* stuff is... where *khasidic* music is still functional music—if it has lyrics, those lyrics are there to tell you something, to make a particular point. Earlier today (at Klezkanada, a Yiddish culture festival), we passed by a vocal class where the students were learning a song that said “Don't worry about eating or drinking, what's really important for nourishment is davening (praying).” Pretty ironic for secular students to be learning a song like that on a Saturday morning. An even better example is a Yiddish song I've heard around here that says “I will go out in the streets and yell *“shulem* (peace), *shulem*.” I know the song in its original version, where it's not *shulem*, it's *shabbes* (Sabbath). If you drive through the wrong neighborhoods in Jerusalem on a Saturday, this is the song they sing as they pelt your windows with rocks.”²⁷

Still, in contemporary America, all of Jewish folklore, religious or otherwise, tends to be regarded, at least by musicians, as the province of any and every individual who wants to use it, re-contextualized or otherwise. Well-respected neo-klezmer fiddler Alicia Svigals explains her attitude toward sacred-secular co-mingling:

When religious sources are drawn upon, like cantorial singing or Yiddish Hasidic folk songs, their appeal is basically as cultural artifacts—as an official stance... (programs such as klezkamp are)... ethnographic, although the individual's relationship to the material might not necessarily be that detached.²⁸

She also goes on to say that “Postmodern identity is hard to pin down. Things don't mean what they used to.”²⁹ Interestingly, musicians who take such an ethnographic post-modern stance are receiving recognition in the religious world for another reason: for their artistry. In 1992, Svigals herself was sought out by Hasidic superstar Avraham Fried to perform on one of his most popular recordings, *Avinu Malkeynu* (“Our Father, Our King”):

Frank (London—New York based trumpeter, arranger, composer, and klezmatics co-founder) mentioned me to them, and soon this Lubavitcher rabbi, Zalman Goldstein who has a website and mail order business called the “Jewish Learning Group” called me... to make “Vodka Zak,” a klezmer CD of Lubavitcher *niggunim* (melodies). I think Avremi G, Avraham Fried's arranger got my number from Zalman. Both Zalman and Avremi expressed the same reaction when they heard me play: “Wow, this is

27 Alicia Svigals, “Why We Do This Anyway,” in *American Klezmer*, ed. Mark Slobin. (Berkeley: University of California Press 2002), 215).

28 Alicia Svigals, telephone interview with Hankus Netsky, September 2006.

29 Ibid.

so amazing, we had no idea that there were these secular Jews like you people who have such a Jewish feeling to your playing... it sounds even more Jewish than what we do!" I think it was especially true because I played the violin. I think they felt that, here was this heathen, but that *pintele yid* (Jewish essence) was crying out to express itself.³⁰

Such recognition of the work of secular Jews like Svigals is powerful evidence of the emergence of a new kind of Jewish American culture, one in which individuals from entirely separate Jewish worlds can validate each other's perspectives in unexpected ways.

In twenty-first century America, creative Jewish artists and members of their audience are joined together on an inward search where boundaries defined during a previous century have fallen by the wayside. It is a time of new juxtapositions and re-contextualizations, as a generation looks to see what discards it can salvage to create meaning out of contemporary Jewish identity. Their musical mix might, at any moment, include secular songs devoid of the ideology that spawned them, or religious songs separated from the observance that used to give them meaning.

It is hardly surprising that, in such a scene, feathers are occasionally ruffled and the Jewish establishment shakes its collective head wondering what's going on but, at this point, it's hardly for them to decide. Today's Jewish music scene is rich, diverse, confusing, occasionally controversial, sacred, secular, traditional, and innovative, very American—and very much alive.

*Hankus Netsky, who holds a Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology from Wesleyan University, is a multi-instrumentalist, composer and instructor in jazz and contemporary improvisation at the New England Conservatory in Boston, where he has taught for 23 years (serving 10 years as chair of Jazz Studies). He is founder and director of the internationally renowned Klezmer Conservatory Band, and heads the Klezmer Conservatory Foundation for the research in and preservation of Yiddish music. His film credits include **The Fool and the Flying Ship, From Immigrants to Americans, and Three Generations of Working Women**. He composed the score to the musical, **Shlemiel the First**, and the NPR radio series, **Jewish Stories from Eastern Europe and Beyond**. He arranged and directed the music for Joel Gray's **Borshtcapades '94, A Taste of Passover, and A Taste of Chanukah**. He collaborated with violinist Itzhak Perlman on **In the Fiddler's House**, and arranged and performed the music on CBS's **To Life! America Celebrates Israel's 50th**. He has also produced numerous Klezmer Conservatory Band CDs.*

30 Ibid.

Crazy Jane Talks with the Rabbis: Pedagogy and Privacy in Liturgy

By Catherine Madsen

Much of liberal liturgical revision presupposes that modern Jews are easily puzzled, offended, or confused. Liturgists' efforts to modernize prayer-book language and theology are aimed at making the prayers "accessible," immediately comprehensible and unambiguous. Essentially the revisions employ a sort of classroom model, though they abdicate any real teaching role, preferring to meet the pupils where they are and leave them there. When congregants don't know Hebrew, it's unthinkable that they should be helped to learn; when the nature and uses of prayer are foreign to them, it's impossible that foreignness should be presented as intriguing rather than frightening. Congregations must be made to do things together: to recite responsive readings, or read stanzas of an undemanding poem in round-robin. They must be told what to think and feel by means of explanations and *kavvanot*. Someone who doesn't participate—who sits to one side with an *Art Scroll Siddur*, like a kid with a comic book inside the text—is inattentive, insubordinate, not playing the game.

But liturgy, it seems to me, is designed much more on a public library model than a pedagogical one. You take what you want. There's a body of text: some parts of it catch your attention and others don't, and this is not something you're doing wrong. The text is accessible in some respects and not in others, and this is not something the author is doing wrong. When you don't recognize a word, you may look for a definition or you may not bother, and if you don't bother you'll gradually learn it through context. You roughly understand the purpose of the book, though you may have major readjustments to make as you learn to place it in its historical context. And ultimately you accept or reject it through a complex private equation that no teacher could entirely understand or gainsay. As a reader, you may always prefer Kipling or Tolkien to their more politically acceptable counterparts; you owe something to the writers who saved your life as a child, the personalities that woke you to language and feeling. I've talked to major Jewish feminist thinkers who can't cut from their souls the words *Avinu malkeinu*: there's more to the experience of davening than what you believe in.

Liturgy differs from library reading in not being solitary, yet it's more like a reading room with everyone absorbed in their own books, having a general sense of the time and politely making room for each other, than it is like a class

discussion on a specified topic. Liturgy even has a collective train of thought, and everyone is on the same page—may even be singing together—but your attention is your own to direct, and your life experience is valid material for reflection. As the library reader becomes absorbed in the mind of the author, the davener becomes absorbed in the prayer book—which is either the mind of God, the collective mind of the rabbis, or the davener’s own mind, but that never really has to be decided.

I want to argue for the library model of liturgy over the classroom model as being more sustaining over the long term. Liturgy has to last us a long time; it needs puzzles and confusions and even offenses, which can be resolved in various ways at various times of life, or remain unsolved altogether. To get all your learning from your teachers is a recipe for intellectual dependency, whereas eclectic and unguided reading promotes exploration, creates productive shocks of juxtaposition, and encourages independence of thought.

Following the publication of the Haddassah-Brandeis Institute report *Matrilineal Ascent/Patrilineal Descent*,¹ which concludes that men’s waning interest in liberal Judaism is a consequence of women’s full access to leadership, the question of the day in Jewish education is “What do men want?” I suspect that they want to be let alone to think, with material that catalyzes thought. My guess is that liberal liturgical revisions as a whole have contributed more to the male exodus than feminism per se: it is hard to have patience with the endless procession of mediocre supplementary readings, aimed at group bonding rather than real thinking or feeling, that constantly intrude themselves on the davening (a phenomenon that a male friend of mine describes as *tefilas interruptus*). Women in general may have a higher tolerance than men for group bonding; also liberal liturgy claims to represent them, and is the first public Jewish liturgy to claim to represent them, and most women have powerful inhibitions against impatience. But I am not the only woman to find the new liturgies thin. As a gentle and generous professional woman in my community said to me recently, “You’re supposed to like it, so you try to like it”—no great testimonial to the appeal of the revisions, still less to their liberating potential. If the men leaving liberal Judaism are finding something more interesting elsewhere, I hope they will send dispatches.

The origins of the current liturgical style are not hard to trace. In sociological terms, liberal Jewish liturgists in America first responded to the social anxieties of the immigrant generations in an overwhelmingly Protestant country, and are now responding to the feminist principles (and sometimes

1 A pdf of *Matrilineal Ascent/Patrilineal Descent* is available at <http://www.brandeis.edu/hbi/pubs/gendermonograph.html>.

the Buddhist and New Age enthusiasms) of the immigrants' grandchildren. In historical terms, the immigrants' desperate break with old-country families and educational structures—and the eventual destruction of those families and structures in Europe—gave rise to a system in which only rabbis were expected to be fully liturgically competent. In political terms, the children and grandchildren of socialists found it easy to think that liturgy was disposable, and that the way to rectify its injustices was to smash them and replace them with slogans. Cumulatively, however, the process represents not so much the feminization as the infantilization of Jewish liturgy. Around the edges of Jewish education, the denunciation of “pediatric Judaism” is gathering steam, but the news has yet to reach most liberal liturgists.

Meanwhile the traditional liturgy still points the way toward a more absorbing approach. Jeremy Schonfield's *Undercurrents of Jewish Prayer*² presents the free-associative liturgical reverie as a hotbed of doubt and subversion. Schonfield explores the idea of liturgy as a literary genre, distinct from biblical narrative, biblical poetry, and talmudic discourse. He considers the siddur as writing, and points out the ambivalence that underlies many apparently straightforward liturgical utterances. In what sense is prayer efficacious? Can Jewish prayer work at all in the absence of the Temple and its sacrifices? Why do we repeat the liturgy—and particular elements within it, like the Kaddish—so often: didn't it “take” the first time? How far can we trust that God is really at the other end of the covenant? With great subtlety and erudition, Schonfield analyzes the daily *Birkot ha-shahar* and *P'sukei d'zimra* line by line, showing how phrases and passages from the *Tanakh* are recontextualized and their meanings skewed or even reversed when transplanted into the siddur. By treating scriptural citations as “lexical items that can be recombined at will” (265), the siddur's apparently circumscribed and highly controlled body of prayer nevertheless allows for the most anarchic feelings to surface—protected, as Schonfield points out, by a mutual reticence among daveners that prevents them from inquiring into each other's privacy.

This substrate of ambivalence is built in, consciously or unconsciously, to a liturgy that has been evolving for thousands of years. For those who daven it three times a day, the liturgy is a point of stability to which they return every few hours from every circumstance and mood. It serves as a kind of survival kit for the contingencies of real life: success and humiliation, wealth and poverty, sickness and health, the dangers of daily business and travel, the threat of enemies, the functioning of the body's inner plumbing. Its stabilizing

2 Jeremy Schonfield, *Undercurrents of Jewish Prayer* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2006).

effect enabled some seasoned daveners to keep on davening even in Auschwitz, just as intellectuals recited poetry to themselves, to keep their souls alive. To replace this subtle and introspective tissue of prayer with a liturgy from which ambiguities have been deliberately purged, whose meaning is always clear and never anarchic, is a move that cannot produce an adequate substitute and can only make the Orthodox liturgy look more appealing. But there is no reason liberal liturgy cannot use these same techniques of free-association, ambivalence, introspection and profound motivation—even use them in English, if it wants.

Where Schonfield says that even in childhood he saw the liturgy as “teasingly opaque,” liberal liturgists have generally assumed that the opaque can never tease but only repel. Transparency is one of their first principles. It’s worth looking briefly at how this approach plays out in a coherent and thoroughly developed example, Marcia Falk’s *Book of Blessings*.³ Falk was not writing a movement prayer book, so she had the advantage of complete editorial control and the freedom to take great liberties with the traditional text. She did not have to contend with denominational politics, inferior but popular prayers by eminent colleagues, or the many other difficulties of editing a prayer book by committee. No more than Mordecai Kaplan did she attempt to write liturgy without metaphor, but in the service of transparency she replaced metaphors with abstract nouns at certain critical points, as in the *Sh’ma* where she replaced *Adonai eloheinu* with *elohut*. It can prove useful to reject personal language for God and see what remains: to find out what happens when you set out, as Falk did, simply to say what you mean and mean what you say. Yet theological transparency often has a way of diluting poetic language. As G. K. Chesterton remarked of some lines from Shakespeare, “The aim of good prose words is to mean what they say. The aim of good poetical words is to mean what they do not say.”⁴

If we take as a test case Falk’s revision of the *Aleinu*—a problematic text by all liberal accounts—we find that when she says what she means, she first of all means something substantially different from the traditional text. She removes the assertion of chosenness and the denunciation of idolatry that Kaplan and many others have found unacceptable, excisions which from the outset shorten the text radically. Her Hebrew revision is still strongly identifiable as Jewish by phrases like *Aleinu l’shabei’ah*, *tikkun olam*, *hatsmi’ah g’ulah*, and *bay-yom ha-hu*, which serve as a kind of lexical residue of the

3 Marcia Falk, *The Book of Blessings* (San Francisco: Harper, 1996).

4 G. K. Chesterton, “Sorry, I’m Shaw,” *Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton* (Fort Collins, CO: Ignatius Press, 1989), 354.

original text: the apparent theological transparency of the new text is shored up by the opacity of the old one. Her English version, by comparison—and the comparison is important to make, for the sake of readers with little or no Hebrew who will take the English as a direct translation—seems only vestigially Jewish:

It is ours to praise
the beauty of the world

even as we discern
the torn world.

For nothing is whole
that is not first rent

and out of the torn
we make whole again.

May we live with promise
in creation's lap,

redemption budding
in our hands. (288)

This is pleasantly sober and hopeful, makes no supernatural assertions and gives no commandments, and is unexceptionable in liberal liturgical terms. The words creation, redemption, and possibly torn have mild Jewish overtones. But the strongest lexical element in the English version is not Jewish at all: it is Irish, and its echo has dangerous repercussions for Falk's whole project. The lines "For nothing is whole / that is not first rent" are closely borrowed from William Butler Yeats's "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop." To invoke Crazy Jane in a revision of the *Aleinu* is a more risky act than Falk perhaps appreciates; in alluding to Yeats she has exposed her thinking and her verse to his cold eye. Her Hebrew revision simply stands beside the traditional liturgy in a family theological quarrel. Her English version places itself in explicit comparison with the work of a great modern poet, where it must stand or fall on its own merits. This is no longer the friendly world of Jewish

feminism, where women looking for gender-neutral alternatives to *Barukh atah adonai* will applaud whatever they get; this is the literary realm with its pitiless judgments.

Crazy Jane is a recurrent character in Yeats's late work, an outspoken and defiant old woman with a past, whom the local bishop—who has been policing her private life since they were young—exhorts to repent of her sexual sins. Here is the poem in full:

I met the bishop on the road
And much said he and I.
'Those breasts are flat and fallen now,
Those veins must soon be dry;
Live in a heavenly mansion,
Not in some foul sty.'

'Fair and foul are near of kin,
And fair needs foul,' I cried.
'My friends are gone, but that's a truth
Nor grave nor bed denied,
Learned in bodily lowliness
And in the heart's pride.'

'A woman can be proud and stiff
When on love intent;
But Love has pitched his mansion in
The place of excrement;
For nothing can be sole or whole
That has not been rent.'⁵

Yeats's fierce original instantly eclipses Falk's gentle abstractions. Crazy Jane says what she means and means what she says, but she means so much more than Falk wants the *Aleinu* to mean. Falk believes the only way to fix the *Aleinu* is to weaken it: to say only what she can approve, and to relieve the reader of the tormenting puzzle of what it means to be chosen. Yeats declares

5 *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (New York: Macmillan, 1956), 254.

that the tormenting puzzle of our physical nature, at its most disgusting and its most ecstatic, contributes its whole vigor to our moral life. In borrowing from Yeats, Falk was a butterfly inviting an eagle—or a swan: it is painful to see her well-meaning attempt at reconceptualizing the nature of redemption mastered by the brute blood of finely crafted rhythm and physical knowledge. To make an alternative *Aleinu* habitable to Yeats's lines you would have to re-problematize it—either with the disturbing elements of chosenness and teleology that Falk removed, or with new and equally disturbing assertions.

It is worth stepping outside the religious realm and looking at Yeats's standards for his own verse; his work was widely read in his own day, and remains, for all its sophisticated content, among the clearest, most accessible, and most easily committed to memory of 20th-century verse. In his 1937 essay "A General Introduction for My Work," he insists that there must be a strong impersonal element in the writing of verse: "All that is personal soon rots; it must be packed in ice or salt." He speaks of moments in Shakespeare when "the supernatural is present, cold winds blow across our hands, upon our faces, the thermometer falls... There may be in this or that detail painful tragedy, but in the whole work none... [I]magination must dance, must be carried beyond feeling into the aboriginal ice." Yeats wrote constantly on personal subjects—his friends, his séances, his opinions political and literary, his unrequited passion for the Irish revolutionary, Maud Gonne—but by compressing the personal into strict verse forms he intensified and put his experience at a distance, driving it inward to the common human rhythms of language and song. "If I wrote of personal love or sorrow in free verse," he said, "or in any rhythm that left it unchanged, amid all its accident, I would be full of self-contempt because of my egotism and indiscretion, and foresee the boredom of my reader."⁶

The impersonality Yeats speaks of is not un-Jewish or unfamiliar. It was the discipline that enabled Abraham Sutzkever to keep writing his finely crafted Yiddish poems even in the Vilna Ghetto. It is the action of the Mourner's Kaddish, in which the personality and physical presence of our dead is put to one side, and inconsolable pain is forced—"carried beyond feeling into the aboriginal ice"—to express itself as praise. The precisely calibrated sound and rhythm of the *Kaddish* enacts through our own voices the awful paradox of remaining alive and capable of feeling when the recipient of our feeling is dead. Even Crazy Jane's outspokenness, indebted though it is to Jonathan Swift's,⁷ is

6 W. B. Yeats, *Essays and Introductions* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), 522-23.

7 In "The Lady's Dressing Room," 1730, Swift as narrator advises the young Strephon—dismayed by his lady's dirty laundry, cosmetics, and chamberpot—to admire

not outside the realm of permissible Jewish speech: it also has echoes of Ezekiel and Hosea. Indeed it is consonant with Jewish ideas of the body: the intimate realm of sexuality, which is altogether off limits to the bishop, is intimately considered by the rabbis. (Crazy Jane would, of course, be living outside the law in either religion.) In liturgical usage, generally only scripture is allowed to speak as frankly as Crazy Jane, but we will not have contemporary liturgy worth repeating till we have writing that tries to equal scripture.

Such writing serves the liturgy by being strong enough to strengthen it. In the end, the purpose of new liturgy is not to provide a respite from the rigors of prayer, but to intensify them; not to mitigate the effects of prayer, but to compound them. An acceptable theology is at best a secondary goal. I'm told that Richard L. Rubenstein, Death-of-God theologian and author of *After Auschwitz*, used to tell his students that "an essential task of the theologian is to reduce the cognitive dissonance between belief and reality."⁸ An essential task of the liturgist is to increase it.

Liturgy worth years of repetition cannot be neatly packaged in intelligible units. It must be discovered in eagerness and longing and sometimes in pain, in old language and new, in random wanderings among books and in the conflicts of our own minds. It can never resemble the expurgated edition for classroom use; it is what a good book is, a compelling and inexhaustible map of good and evil consonant with our own knowledge. Liberal Jewish liturgists need to learn what librarians know: school is a way-station, a means to an end, and people are glad to get out. Confirmed library users are in it for life.

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women's beauty regardless: "Such order from confusion sprung, / Such gaudy tulips raised from dung."

8 Marc H. Ellis, *Unholy Alliance: Religion and Atrocity in Our Time* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 75. Ellis did not cite a source for this statement, but confirmed in an e-mail of 28 April 2008 that Rubenstein "used to say it in class all the time."



Penitential Trop¹ and the Fishwife

By Victor Tunkel

I write by way of comment on an article in these pages, “Penitential Torah Reading in Ashkenazic Practice.”² It quotes the liturgical explanation of why Ashkenazim alone have felt the need for a distinct Penitential trop: that it arose to reflect sadness at the deaths of the two sons of Aaron, mentioned in the Torah portion for Yom Kippur. It then tackles a musicological analysis of the trop itself. In this it seems to claim that the eastern Ashkenazim adopted a mode related to their Haftarah chant whereas their western brethren’s Penitential trop is derived from ‘Stubentrop,’ the chant of the schoolroom, because it was the custom of the Mahari³ to leyen⁴ thus on Yom Kippur.

I can find no evidence for this duality. There is of course a well-known divide between Eastern and Western Ashkenazic styles (henceforth EA and WA) in the regular Torah and Haftarah tropes. But I had not noticed any great difference between them in the Penitential leyeing, as heard in England or the USA. I have therefore searched for published versions of the *trop*, EA or WA, among the following sources:

MS Sanger (Munich c. 1830 in Idelsohn *Thesaurus* vol. VII), (Naumbourg (Paris 1864, but South German), Sulzer (Vienna 1865), Deutsch (Breslau/Wrocław 1871), Baer (Gothenburg 1877, offering four unspecified alternatives), Wodak (Vienna 1898, but Hungarian), Friedmann (Berlin 1901), F.L. Cohen (*Jewish Encyclopedia* 1903), Perlzweig (London 1912), Scheuermann (Frankfurt 1912), Heller (Brün/Brno 1914), Kisselhof (St. Petersburg 1914), Franck (Paris 1929), Zalmanoff (New York 1948, Chabad), Cohon (Cincinnati 1951), Binder (New York 1959), Ben-Yehuda (Israel 1968), Ne’eman (Israel

1 Yiddish word indicating both the written symbols and sung motives of signs by which Hebrew Scripture is sung publicly (cantillated) in synagogue during worship; it can refer to a single symbol/musical motive or (as here) to an entire system whereby a particular Book/Section of the Hebrew Bible is cantillated.

2 *JSM* vol. 33, 2008: 178-186, “Gleaned from Many Sources.”

3 Rabbi Moshe ben Yaakov Moellin, Mainz, Germany c. 1360-1427, acknowledged halakhic authority—including matters musical pertaining to liturgy—for the German-speaking lands of Central and Western Europe.

4 Cantillate Hebrew Scripture.

1971), Weinfeld (Israel 1972), Werner (*A Voice Still Heard*, NY 1976), Rosenberg (NY 1981), Weisgal (Levine, *Emunat Abba*, Baltimore 1981), Rosenbaum (NY 1982), Zeitlin & Bar-Dayana (Israel 1984), Goren (Israel 1995), Spiro (NY 1999), Portnoy & Wolff (NY 2000), Jacobson (Philadelphia 2002), plus the 1969 Copenhagen recording included with Rossen & Sharvit: *A Fusion of Traditions* (Denmark 2006) referred to below.⁵

Looking at these as a whole, one discerns no variations so marked as to suggest different origins. Much more apparent are minor local variants, and two rare excursive elements: passages colored by Ukrainian-Dorian modality (UD), and/or passages colored by *Ahavah Rabbah* (AR) modality. This suggests to me that the trop, leyned on only three occasions a year and perhaps by only one or two adults in each synagogue, was never defined and taught in the way that regular Torah or Haftarah trop was. Indeed, it is notable how many other books that notate regular trop are not listed above, because they do not bother with Penitential trop at all.

Defining the trop

We need first to look at examples of the basic trop and then at those with the added colorations mentioned above. The *JSM* 2008 article gives an example of WA but it is unsatisfactory, for reasons I shall soon explain. I offer instead a version from the first published monograph ever devoted to trop, Asher Perlzweig's *Manual of Neginoth*.⁶

Perlzweig (1870-1942) was born in Galitzia, studied hazzanut at the Cantorenschule and music at the Conservatoire, both in Vienna. He emigrated to London in 1890 and served at various synagogues before settling at Finsbury Park in 1903, remaining there until 1931. In those days British congregations made it a contractual condition that any new officiant absorbed and faithfully observed their musical minhag, learned all their beloved tunes, trained or worked with the choir, and taught all their *b'nei mitzvah*. Perlzweig did all this assiduously, to such an extent that he was considered worthy of publishing a cantorial manual that bore the approval of all his London fellow-*hazzanim*. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that Perlzweig's notation of the Penitential trop represents what he found to be the practice of 19th-century British Jewry. That it had been so for decades is attested by its close resemblance

5 It is understood that the dates and places of publication do not necessarily indicate the age or locality of the particular tradition; some of the more recent notations just photo-reprint earlier sources.

6 London, 1912.

to WA versions published on the continent decades earlier by Wodak and Baer, etc. That is why I adopted it in my book, *The Music of the Hebrew Bible*.⁷

Example 1 is Perlzweig's notation, in *Adonai Malakh* (*AM*) on C, exhibiting the mode's characteristic flatted 7th and 10th, here, the B-flat and E-flat. Where Perlzweig's *pashta* rises only to D, some continental versions have *pashta* rising to E-flat. Perlzweig's more triumphal trop motives—*azla* and *pazeir*—do rise to the flatted 10th (E-flat), in line with most other sources.

ma - pakh_ pash-ta_ za - keif ka - ton_ mer - kha tip - ha_ mu - nah_ et - nah_ - ta

kad - ma v' az - la_ pa - zeir_

mer - kha tip - ha_ sof_ pa - suk mer - kha_ tip - ha_ sof_ pa - suk

FINAL

Example 1. Asher Perlzweig's Penitential trop (excerpted), showing flatted 7th and 10th of *Adonai Malakh* mode on C.

The 2008 *JSM* article relied for an example of WA Penitential trop on a recording made by a Mr. Kaminkowitz of the Copenhagen Synagogue in 1969, included on the CD accompanying Jane Mink Rossen & Uri Sharvit's recent book.⁸ I would agree that the recording is a fair exemplar of WA Penitential trop. However, the recording only transcribed a single verse (Genesis 22:14).⁹ It thereby missed the two occurrences of *kadma-azla* in earlier verses where the flatted tenth is heard. It also transcribed the final trop-clause's top note as an E-natural rather than the expected E-flat. It is true that one or two of the sources I listed earlier show E-natural in their cadence—and that on the CD Mr. Kaminkowitz's intonation is imprecise. But the book's own transcription¹⁰ clearly shows an E-flat.

Should this seem an insignificant matter I would repeat that the flatted 10th as seen in Perlzweig's and other notations of the final clause is an essential characteristic of the Penitential trop, just as it is in the *AM* prayer mode. It

7 Tynsder Press, London 2006.

8 *A Fusion of Traditions—Liturgical Music in the Copenhagen Synagogue*, University Press of Southern Denmark, 2006.

9 *JSM* article, p. 182.

10 *Fusion*, p. 148.

appears in all the major compendia, such as Baer, Wodak, Heller and Friedmann, and also in the detailed trop monographs of Binder and Ne’eman. Nor is there any east-west divide among these Ashkenazic sources. But another possible explanation exists for the *JSM* 2008 article’s notation of an E-natural: mistaken reliance on a mis-transcribed piece of doggerel by the renegade 17th-century Jew, Christian Gerson von Recklichhausen.

Penitential Trop and Stubentrop: Enter the Fishwife

In advancing theories as to why we have this special trop for High Holy Day Torah leyeing, the *JSM* 2008 article accepts the account mentioned earlier of Maharil’s having adopted Stubentrop in his leyeing. How reliable this is as an explanation is hard to say. We do know how influential Maharil was in establishing many other of our musical/liturgical customs. Nevertheless, we can test the theory’s plausibility by examining Stubentrop to see its relationship, if any, to Penitential trop.

First, what is Stubentrop? The article accepts Eric Werner’s portrayal of Stubentrop¹¹ as derived from the tract *Chelec* [Hebrew: *Heilek*], *oder Thalmudischer Jüdenschatz*, published in Helmstadt in 1610. Its author was the aforementioned apostate Gerson. In misrepresenting Jewish beliefs to his newfound Christian brethren Gerson sets out some measures of music with silly words, apparently to caricature what he purports to be the learning-or-reciting style of chanting questions and answers in Jewish teaching.

Example 2 gives the music transcribed in modern notation by Francis Lyon Cohen.¹² Its tonic (C) is indicated by the double-length final note. The song therefore starts on the dominant (G) and is in a very simple pentatonic major of little character. For some unexplained reason Cohen raised the last measure’s descending notes up an octave, giving a top mediant (E). This error was repeated by Werner (who also mistakenly translates the last monetary amount mentioned in the lyrics, *zwene* as “twenty” [pfennigs], so missing the punch-line, such as it is. And the *JSM* 2008 article repeats both these errors. Here is the text as it should read:

Customer: Ma’m, how much for a herring?	Fishwife: Three pfennigs?
Customer: That’s too dear.	Fishwife: Well, one pfennig?
Customer: That’s too cheap.	Fishwife: Alright, so two pfennigs.

11 *A Voice Still Heard*, p. 78.

12 *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1903, Vol. III, 549.

5 Fraw, wi gebt die Her- ing? Umb drey Pfen- ning! Das is zu theu- er! Umb
ei- nen Pfenn- ning? Das is zu wol- feil! Dar umb umb zwe- ne Pfen- ning...

Example 2. Eric Werner’s modern notation of the apostate Gerson’s supposed representation of a Stubentrop.

Werner, again following Cohen, proposes this as the oldest recorded example of Stubentrop, but gives no later example. I offer several objections to accepting Gerson’s piece as an example of a learning mode.

1. It has nothing like any sort of mnemonic repetitive-recitative character. Surely a learning aid, to be effective, has to imitate the contour of a human voice rising and falling in association with the text, exposition or argument, so as to make that voice and its words ingrained and memorable.¹³
2. From what many experts believe to be the regular pentatonic German Torah-leyening trop of the Middle Ages, this example, if chanted by Maharil, would hardly be a radical musical departure from the weekly norm. But applied, as suggested, to the portion read on Yom Kippur, it would have been a travesty.
3. This music is nothing like the Penitential trop we have inherited. Werner himself expresses this doubt. The most he can say is that “there is some relationship between the [Gerson] Stubentrop and the cantillation: the rising fourths and the Mixolydian mode with the B-flat are common and characteristic elements.”¹⁴ Perhaps readers can see such resemblances in Gerson’s pentatonic piece; I am unable to.
4. What Gerson was depicting (or should we say ridiculing?) through this simple-minded question-and-answer episode remains unclear. It would therefore be most unfortunate if this one isolated, hostile example—itsself a freak survival—should influence all our subsequent notions.

Identifying Stubentrop

Here I will go out on a limb. What I have always understood to be Stubentrop is preserved in various expository passages in our liturgy. One such passage, Example 3, is the Father’s explication of “Matza”—*Ha lahma anya* (“This is our ancestors’ Bread of Affliction”)—at the beginning of the Seder ritual:

13 The custom of chanting the Talmud is ancient; it was so memorized and taught long before its committal to writing. And long after it was written, some manuscripts still had cantillation signs, à la Scripture; Yosef Fagin, “The Function of Talmudic Chant and Cantillation,” *Journal of Jewish Music and Liturgy*, Vol. XXX, 2008.

14 *A Voice Still Heard*, p. 78.



Example 3. The traditional chant for *Ha lah_{ma} anya*, an expository passage at the beginning of the Seder ritual.

Abraham Baer¹⁵ gives it as applying traditionally to *Mah nishtanah* (“How does this night differ?”), another non-rhythmical expository passage, and of course just the very chant-tune a child would know. Lionel Wolberger¹⁶ offers a diagrammatic cantillation of this, charted in comparison with the opening Mishnah of tractate *Bava Metzia*. **Example 4** is the way I recall hearing it:



Example 4. The author’s recollection of a chant for the opening Mishnah of tractate *Bava Metzia*.

In these “didactic” examples, with all their stark fourths and fifths, jerky rhythm, emphases and halfway pauses, we can surely detect the vocal contour of the teacher, taken up and memorized by his pupils. These are all recognizable elements of the Study mode. Having established that, we can then go back and look at the Penitential trop in its oldest notations. All the elements of this suggested Stubentrop are there: the fifths and fourths, though softened by linking motifs—as one would expect. And the *MA* prayer mode, a treasured possession of both WA and EA, seems clearly to underly both the trop and this suggested Stubentrop. Which of the three came first, and what was the relationship between them, are questions I readily leave for wiser heads.

Two Intruders

In some, but only some, of the EA versions of Penitential trop we unexpectedly find two old acquaintances. The earliest of the EA versions is in Zinovi Kisselhof’s *Lieder-Sammelbuch*,¹⁷ Example 5. His notation in C, with the reciting tone on the supertonic (D), has the flatted 7th—here on B-flat in *pashta*—as in most other versions. But in his *t’lishah g’dolah* and *gershayim* we find a tone-row: D / E-flat / F-sharp / G. This little flavoring of the AR mode seems to

15 *Baal T’fillah*, p. 170.

16 “Music of Holy Argument, the Ethnomusicology of a Talmud Session,” *Modern Jews and Their Musical Agendas*, Ezra Mendelsohn, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press), 1993, pp. 110-136.

17 St. Petersburg: 1911, published in 1914.

be a local or personal mannerism, because in other melismatic combinations such as *munah-revia* and *darga-t'vir* he introduces no intervallic deviations within the Penitential trop.¹⁸

Example 5. Zinovi Kisselhof's Penitential trop (excerpted), showing AR flavoring in motives for *t'lishah g'dolah* and *gershayim*.

Shneur Salman Zeitlin and Haim Bar-Dayan,¹⁹ while reproducing Kisselhof with approval, instead prescribe UD flavoring for the above-mentioned melismatic trop motives as well as for *darga* and *revia* (Leviticus 16:14), **Example 6**.

Example 6. Shneur Salman Zeitlin and Haim Bar-Dayan's Penitential trop (excerpted), showing UD flavoring in motives for *darga* and *revia*.

Y. L. Ne'eman, born in Jerusalem to a family of Lithuanian *hazzanim*, stressed UD still further in his monograph, *Tseliley hammiqra*.²⁰ He presented the complete UD scale in its customary descending form, at the outset, for the entire Penitential trop system (**Example 7**). The only three "normal"

18 Beyond the scope of the present article, Kisselhof's Haftarah version has augmented-seconds in almost every trop motive.

19 *Miqraey Qodesh* (New York: Israel Matz Foundation), 1984, p. 376.

20 Jerusalem: Israel Institute for Sacred Music, 1971, "Minhag of Lita-Polin," p. 344.

melismatic motives he offered were *t'vir*, *t'lishah g'dolah*, and the final *sof-pasuk* clause.



Example 7. Y. L. Ne'eman's UD scale for almost all Lithuanian Penitential trop motives.

It seems that some EA sources incorporated, idiosyncratically, local colorings such as AR and UD within their Penitential trop, without abandoning its underlying mode.²¹ Surely that is the historical sequence of events, according to three of our most respected musicologists.

Idelsohn: In Eastern Europe... the Pentateuch mode was badly corrupted.²²

Avenary: The musical dialect of Russia's Jewry, has been affected by the surrounding Turco-Tatar tribes; as a result of continuous exposure to these Central Asian sounds, the scales of their Pentateuch chants took on Asiatic quality.²³

Werner: It [WA] is older and less contaminated by Byzantine and Slavonic elements than the Eastern European tradition.²⁴

These statements, referring to the EA versions of our Bible cantillation systems as a whole, seem especially applicable in the present context.

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21 As opposed to Kisselhof and Ne'eman; Baruch ben Yehuda notates Penitential trop almost entirely "conventionally."

22 *Thesaurus* Vol. 7, xiv.

23 *The Ashkenazi tradition of Biblical Chant 1500-1900* (Tel-Aviv University), 1978, p. 66).

24 *The Sacred Bridge* (New York: Columbia University Press), 1959, p. 437.



Re: Sulzer and Minkowsky

August 7, 2011

The article in *JSM* 2011, “Salomon Sulzer (1804-1890) Meets Pinchas Minkowsky (1859-1924),” shows Minkowsky as a novice coming to be interviewed by an aged Sulzer, who had long retired from singing or—as he now explained—even from accepting new students. Minkowsky, who had hoped to study with the Master, was bitterly disappointed, but went on to become Chief Cantor at the Brody Synagogue in Odessa (1884-1920) and to publish widely in various journals on Jewish Music, in Hebrew, German and Yiddish.

JSM 2011 also presented an excellent translation of several chapters from *Mayn lebn*, the autobiography of Zevulun Kwartin (1874-1952): “My Life in Turn-of-the-Century Vienna and its Environs,” which covers the years preceding WWI in which he won international acclaim through early Deutsche Gramophone recordings. Before then, as a fledgling hazzan, Kwartin had traveled to Odessa and auditioned for Minkowsky—in an ironic reprise of Minkowsky’s earlier pilgrimage to Sulzer. He, too, was to leave disappointed, but for a different reason. Minkowsky told him:

Young man, it would be sinful to devote a beautiful voice such as yours to *hazzanut*. Of what use is it to serve as a synagogue cantor, a profession that is no longer honored? In addition, there is presently a surplus of *hazzanim* and a shortage of positions. You would do far better to pursue an operatic career.

Momentarily crushed, Kwartin was not to be dissuaded from what he felt was his destiny. The very next day, he went to see Minkowsky’s equally famous Music Director, the Brody Synagogue’s Choirmaster/Composer since 1871, David Nowakowsky. After Kwartin had sung for him and repeated Minkowsky’s advise, Nowakowsky burst out laughing:

With that voice, if you learned even minimally how to cultivate it, and delved a bit more deeply into the requirements of professional *hazzanut* from the perspective of both traditional and modern *nusach*, you would have no trouble finding a position. There aren’t that many good *hazzanim*; Minkowsky frightened you for no reason!

This pivotal incident in Kwartin's life underscores the intergenerational tensions between accomplished-but-insecure cantorial luminaries and talented-but-inexperienced aspirants who sought their counsel over a century ago. The story appears in my latest volume, *The Pinchas Minkowsky Book* (2011: 304-309). I trust it will prove of interest to *JSM* readers.

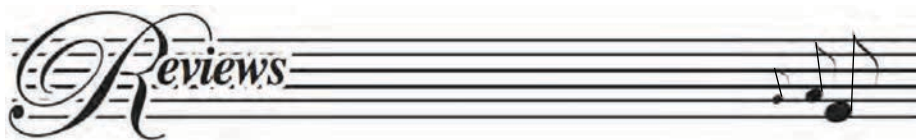
Akiva Zimmermann

Tel Aviv

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Odessa: The Brody Synagogue's interior and choir early in the 20th century. (Cantor Pinchas Minkowsky stands 6th from the right, back row.)



The Rabbinical Assembly's *Mahzor Lev Shalem* for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur,
ed. Edward Feld et. al. (2010), 468 + xv pp.

Reviewed by Ruth Langer

In many ways, prayer books express the values and identity of the Jewish communities that they serve. It is therefore particularly noteworthy that the Rabbinical Assembly of the American Conservative Movement did not produce its own liturgies for approximately half a century after its establishment. Its first High Holy Day mahzor was commissioned, even later, in 1957, but the resultant *The High Holyday Prayer Book: Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur*, translated and arranged by Ben Zion Bokser, was published in 1959 by the Hebrew Publishing Company, a commercial press, listing only the names of the Rabbinical Assembly and United Synagogue-appointed editorial committee. This volume followed the traditional Ashkenazi rite very closely, eliminating some but by no means all *piyyutim* and introducing new material sparingly and almost exclusively in English as meditations before significant points in the service.¹ In 1972, the Rabbinical Assembly published in its own name a substantially different text, the *Mahzor for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur: A Prayer Book for the Days of Awe*, edited by Jules Harlow. Its introduction, alluding perhaps obliquely to Bokser, states explicitly, “Our editorial approach demands not only a new translation but editing the Hebrew text and introducing a variety of prose and poetry as well as explanatory notes and rubrics” (v).

Almost forty years later, in 2010, the Rabbinical Assembly published *Mahzor Lev Shalem* (henceforth *MLS*), edited by a committee chaired by Rabbi Edward Feld comprised mostly of rabbis, but including also cantors and some laypeople. The contents of this elegantly produced volume reflect deep reflection on the liturgical needs of our times, enabling a richly meaningful spiritual and intellectual engagement with the prayers and themes of the High Holy Days for Jews from diverse backgrounds and dispositions. It does this primarily by offering a much richer “variety of prose and poetry

1 A significant exception to this is his addition of a reading and *piyyut* by Hillel Bavli reflecting on the Holocaust in conjunction with the memorializing of rabbinic martyrs in the *Eilleh Ezkerah* of Yom Kippur musaf, 434-436.

as well as explanatory notes and rubrics” than found in Harlow, while at the same time returning judiciously to a more traditional liturgical experience and more literal translations.

This is largely a user-friendly and intellectually honest volume. It pays significant attention to communicating liturgical structure, signally that these prayers are not a random collection. The bottom of each page identifies clearly both in Hebrew and in English one’s location in the service. The English translations contain even more substantial indications of the service’s structure. These translations themselves strive with remarkable success (given the difficulty of the task) to be simultaneously a literal and honest portrayal of what the Hebrew text communicates and readable English.² A third level of structural explanation generally appears in the commentary on the right-hand margin.

While the presumption is that (most) prayers will be led in Hebrew, the beginner is not left out. Parts of the liturgy that are most frequently sung by the congregation, as in the 1998 *Siddur Sim Shalom* for Shabbat and Festivals (henceforth *SSS*), appear also in transliterated Hebrew. These, as well as the service’s rubrics (instructions) appear in red, easily located. These collectively invite the intelligent congregant who is less familiar with the service to learn about it instead of feel frustrated and excluded by its strangeness.

At the same time, the book invites ever deeper participation by those already familiar with the liturgy. The layout even of familiar prayers, in most places, emphasizes their internal poetic structures. Historically, this is unusual for Jewish prayer books, especially for statutory prayers, probably because such presentation requires space and presumes read rather than memorized prayers. While it has become more common today,³ some decisions here are particularly striking.⁴ At the same time, *MLS* does not contain vast areas of

2 A comparison of prayers shared with the 1998 *Siddur Sim Shalom* demonstrates this move towards the literal. See, for instance, the translation of נשמת כל חי (SSS 1998, 104-106; *MLS*, 67-69), or the ברכה המינים (SSS 1998, 6; *MLS*, 436, 453). A comparison of this translation with that of the British Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (*Authorised Daily Prayer Book...* [London: United Synagogue, 2006], *The Koren Siddur: American Edition* [Jerusalem, 2009]), also in excellent English and honest in its literal nature, suggests that they are of similar level albeit with some differences in specific decisions.

3 See the Orthodox prayer books produced by *ArtScroll* (where this is inconsistent) and *Koren*.

4 See, for instance, the layout of האל בתעצמות ערך on the top of p. 69, and the right-hand commentary on it. This text also numbers the ten verses that precede each blowing of shofar in the Rosh Hashanah *musaf* service.

blank space, unlike in the recent prayer books of the American Reconstructionist and Reform movements. Instead, wisely chosen readings provide food for thought and this prayer book, while physically slightly larger than Harlow's, remains of manageable dimensions.

Commentaries and readings appear on the margins of each two-page spread, sometimes filling the bottom of the page as well. The commentary, adjacent to the Hebrew text on the right, is pedagogic, addressing the intellectual needs of the modern worshiper. It accurately presents the history of the prayer, explains its vocabulary and sources, and sometimes discusses concepts found in it. Especially the last explicitly names potential conflicts with contemporary understandings of the world and suggests positive ways to interpret the liturgy. Other prayer books often handle such issues through carefully nuanced non-translations; the honesty underlying this volume requires a healthy degree of confrontation and struggle. Thus, for instance, on God's attribute as one who "gives life to the dead," this volume offers a fairly lengthy comment acknowledging the complexity of understanding this concept, suggesting that even leading sages have "cautioned against speculation about" this concept, understanding it "to be an articulation of God's supreme power: God cares even for the dead."⁵

This element of the right-hand commentary blends into the purpose of the series of readings and meditations found in the left-hand margin of the page opening. Indeed, at times, it is difficult to discern what, beyond perhaps the needs of layout, determined the placement. In general, though, the left-hand margin offers a rich set of (usually) attributed readings, drawn almost entirely from the Jewish world but from literally all corners of it, designed to enhance the spiritual experience of engaging with the prayers and themes of the day. Everything here is offered in English; only in a few cases are Hebrew originals included as well. Perhaps because these readings are necessarily brief and must be accessible, the majority of texts are of relatively recent vintage. Two emphases stand out: the desire to enable spirituality has led to many Hasidic teachings as well as citations of Abraham Joshua Heschel; the desire to give women a voice receives its primary expression through this vehicle. Some

5 *MLS*, pp. 12 et al. Musaf services (p. 126 et al.) suggest understanding the term to refer to "spiritual revival in this world." In contrast, see, for instance, Bokser's translations of *מחיה המתים* as "life eternal" (p. 31 et al.); Harlow's 1972 *mahzor* begins the prayer "Your might, O Lord, is boundless. Your lovingkindness sustains the living. Your great mercies give life to the dead," skipping the first reference to resurrection of the dead. He concludes the prayer translating *המתים המחיה* as "Master of life and death" (p. 31 et al.). The editions of *SSS* restore the missing phrase.

congregations may choose to read these compositions communally; many congregants will choose to dip into them in the course of the day.

Much attention was also given to the liturgical core of *MLS*. Prayers recited year round generally follow the model of the 1998 *SSS* (with new translations), except that the option between the versions of the “First B’rakhah: Our Ancestors”—never called by its traditional name “Avot” (patriarchs) but rather offered as “with Patriarchs” and “with Patriarchs and Matriarchs”—appears in parallel columns instead of on sequential pages. The option of inserting the matriarchs is also offered more consistently here throughout, every time the traditional Hebrew text mentions the patriarchs.⁶ This suggests that the movement to make Conservative liturgy gender-neutral is becoming more and more normative.

The distinctive feature of the High Holy Day liturgy is its *piyyutim* (liturgical poetry), which since the nineteenth century have been recited in the Ashkenazi rite only on these days. Like its Conservative predecessors, *MLS* judiciously chooses among possible *piyyutim* for each service, avoiding those that are difficult even for the well-educated to comprehend. Thus, much is omitted. These include especially the opening three *piyyutim* of the *kedushta*⁷ for each repetition of the amidah. However, this omission (as well as any of *piyyut* inserted in the blessings surrounding the *shema*) results in a substantial loss of liturgical focus on the specific message of the day.⁸ Perhaps with time some new poetry will emerge that can fill this gap.

The editors of *MLS* do preserve in its conventional place in the first blessing the standardized *r’shut* (...מסוד הכמים, “Inspired by the insight of sages...”), which their commentary acknowledges serves as an introduction to *piyyutim*.⁹ However, as no *piyyut* appears for another two pages, this now lacks

6 Translated, however, with the neutral “ancestors.”

7 The classical *kedushta* elaborates on the themes of the day, climaxing with the recitation of the angelic liturgy of the *kedushah* itself. It begins with a series of three short poems which originally replaced the bodies of the first three blessings of the *amidah* and focused directly on the day’s theme. These were followed by as many as six additional poems that transitioned gradually to the themes of the angelic liturgy. The editors of *MLS* have selected poetry from this later part of the *kedushta*. For an excellent introduction to *piyyut*, see Laura Lieber, *Yannai on Genesis* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2010), Part I.

8 Bokser and Harlow had preserved the *magein*, the first of these preceded by מסוד הכמים. Note also that *MLS* does not offer any different liturgy for the second day of Rosh Hashanah except, of course, for its Scriptural readings.

9 Note that this comment’s identifying this as a response to the controversy over the halakhic legitimacy of the recitation of *piyyut* (discussed at length in my *To Wor-*

context. It could have been moved to precede the repetition entirely, but in the *musaf* services, as in Harlow, they have moved the *hin'ni* (the prayer of the leader), a more elaborate expression of the same ideas, to this location.¹⁰ This traditionally precedes the silent recitation of the *amidah*, but does indeed make more sense here. Might the *r'shut* be moved instead to precede the first *piyyut* actually recited?

The editors have also chosen wisely which *piyyutim* to include in this *mahzor*. Only custom and not law dictates what appears in any particular *mahzor*, allowing significant freedom for a movement whose roots are in the Ashkenazi rite but that does not limit itself to this. Familiar, accessible Ashkenazi-rite *piyyutim* with well-beloved melodies for congregational singing have received obvious preference. Those mumbled in Orthodox settings (and in many cases relegated to the back of the book in modern Israeli *mahzorim*) have all disappeared. There are numerous cases, though, where the editors have introduced accessible poetry (and readings) from elsewhere. For instance, Harlow had included English-only “meditations” before the liturgical elaborations preceding the three sets of shofar blasts in *musaf*. Instead, *MLS*'s “Meditations on Malkhuyot” (p. 155) excerpts from a *piyyut* traditionally placed earlier in the service, מלך עליון, “The Sovereign on High.” The parallel meditations on “Zikhronot” (p. 159) and “Shofarot” (pp. 163-64) excerpt from the earliest known *piyyut* for these locations, by the fifth century Yose ben Yose. “Zikhronot” adds an unattributed modern reading, just in English, and “Shofarot” adds a poem by the Israeli Leah Goldberg in Hebrew and English. All of these are accompanied by additional contemporary readings in the left margin.

A similar pattern of decisions shapes the selections of *s'lihot* (penitential poetry) on Yom Kippur. *MLS* structures these uniquely, explicitly offering three cycles at the Kol Nidre and Neilah services (where many Orthodox synagogues recite many more, but Bokser and Harlow offered two each time, sometimes in abbreviated form), and including a briefer but explicit poetic section in the morning and *Musaf* services where they had been eliminated from most Ashkenazi rites.¹¹ Here too *MLS* introduces materials from the

ship God Properly: Tensions Between Liturgical Custom and Halakhah [Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1998], ch. 3) is questionable. The genre of *r'shut* expresses the humility of the cantor, called upon to represent his community before God.

10 As well as offering a version in the grammatical feminine. Even the version for a man removes the traditional references to the person's physical maturity, allowing here for a younger leader.

11 Each cycle typically consists of poetry (of penitence and/or rebuke), then compositions from verses, followed by the recitation of God's Thirteen Attributes of

Sephardi and Italian rites, as well as particularly beloved elements from the Ashkenazi tradition. However, instead of repeating the same introduction to the Thirteen Attributes each time, it offers three different introductions. While more intellectually interesting, it is possible that these cumulative decisions reduce the emotional sense of banging desperately on the gates of Heaven communicated by the traditional repetitions of the Thirteen Attributes within their larger setting. However, *MLS* is to be praised for rejecting the thirteenth-century Sephardi *s'lihah* that Harlow had introduced in the morning service (p. 451) which is theologically difficult at a number of levels.¹² It is also to be praised for explicitly restoring אלה אזכרה (*Eilleh Ezk'rah*: These I Recall) to its function as the *s'lihah* of the musaf service.

Traditionally, the סדר העבודה (The Temple Service) precedes “*Eilleh Ezk'rah*” as an elaborate memorialization of the sacrifices of the day. Harlow, however, reflecting the Conservative Movement’s general hesitancy about grieving for loss of sacrificial worship, had printed this element after Musaf (p. 598 ff.) and had included just a note at this point (pp. 554-55) that “those congregations whose custom it is to recite *Seder Ha'avodah*” should insert it. His text began with a four-page long English paraphrase of the traditional *piyyut* combined with discussion of how one might approach the idea of animal sacrifices. Then for the critical descriptions of the Yom Kippur liturgy, it employed the language of Mishnah *Yoma* instead of its payy'tanic liturgical paraphrase. It concluded with a declaration that prayer has now taken the place of sacrifices.

As is typical, *MLS* steps back part way from this radical rewriting of the liturgy. The *Seder Ha'avodah* appears in its traditional location. For the most part it employs received liturgical texts. However, it does begin with a two pages Hasidic teaching about the significance of the moment when the High Priest invokes the name of God in the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur,¹³ designed to help the reader appreciate the significance of what follows. The received *piyyut* that follows, though, consists of an abbreviated anthology, beginning

mercy. In Ashkenaz, the compositions from verses alone generally remain as introductions to the recitation of the *viddui* (confessional) prayers in the morning, Musaf, and afternoon services. Harlow reintroduces the recitation of the Thirteen Attributes, but without poetic introduction at this point in *musaf* and *minhah* and with a single *s'lihah* in the morning.

12 Post-Holocaust, a prayer that suggests that one’s suffering is self-inflicted is particularly problematic. In addition, this poem begins with seeking vengeance, a dangerous theme in today’s world where Israel holds military power.

13 P. 326. Note that this uses the entire page spread, and unlike all other page spreads in the book, it begins on the left and continues on the right. This is not sufficiently indicated in the text itself.

with selections from versions used in other rites before turning to Meshullam ben Kalonymus's familiar text for the Yom Kippur rituals themselves. *MLS*'s abbreviations mean that the grand sweep of the payy'tanic tradition is lost, one that moves from the creation of the world through Genesis to the emergence of the descendants of Levi as the priests who will perform this ritual, thus suggesting that the entire purpose of the preceding history was for this moment. However, the difficult language of Meshullam and the tradition of mumbling this in most Orthodox Ashkenazi synagogues creates its own loss of meaning; the abbreviations here allow for greater if selective focus. *MLS* concludes this section with Harlow's presentation of prayer and deeds of lovingkindness as adequate compensation for the lack of sacrifices in post-Temple times.

In the wake of the Holocaust, both Bokser and Harlow had felt the need to expand the memorialization of martyrs offered in *Eilleh Ezk'rah* and consequently to abbreviate and substitute for the traditional narrative. Instead of the stylized ten martyrs of the medieval piyyut, *MLS* recalls four, beginning with a selection from that *piyyut* about Rabbi Yishmael, but then substituting rabbinic-era prose texts about three others of the most famous. It then goes on to include readings from a Crusades chronicle, a poem responding to the exile of Jews from Spain, and then a Yiddish poem recalling the author's family and community lost in the Holocaust. Particularly noteworthy here is *MLS*'s radical rewriting of the opening stanza, which it like Harlow uses as a refrain, binding the whole together. Instead of the second line's reading "For the arrogant have devoured us like an unturned cake," (only the first half of which Harlow, p. 555, translates) it reads "for the bitter course of our history, tears pour from my eyes" (p. 337). We mourn without directing specific and enduring anger at past oppressors. This implicitly allows us to move on in our relationships with today's neighbors.

This sort of retrieval with modification also marks the Yizkor liturgy. Harlow had moved Yizkor to between the afternoon and neilah services, perhaps in imitation of its placement in American Reform liturgies. *MLS* restores it to its traditional location in conjunction with the Torah service. Like Harlow, it offers a series of meditative readings as an introduction, although these appear in Hebrew as well as in English and come from sources ranging from the Bible to the Reconstructionist *Mahzor Hadash*. Noteworthy is the presentation of the memorial prayers themselves: they appear here in only two categories, male and female, but within each there is specific language for a parent, a spouse, a partner, a sibling, a child, an other relative, a friend, and others (p. 291). This represents a significant re-sorting and widening of the

categories of people for whom one would traditionally recite this prayer but reflects well the shifting concepts of family and community in twenty-first century western society. Communal prayers appear on the following page in memory of martyrs, congregants, and Holocaust victims. That the last does not name the perpetrators is fully appropriate, as I have argued elsewhere.¹⁴

MLS also includes a small number of elements that can only be labeled “creative.” The evening service for Rosh Hashanah precedes the traditional Kiddush with a קידוש השנה (The Dedication of the New Year), which has aggregated readings from Genesis 1 with medieval and modern poetry and prose to reflect on the intersection of the creation of the world and of humankind with prayers for the coming year (pp. 20-24). The Rosh Hashanah Torah service includes תפילות על שבר ושלימות (Prayers of Brokenness and Wholeness) which extends the boundaries of concern expressed by the traditional *mi she-beirakh* for the sick to include caregivers of all sorts as well as reflection on how the various shofar calls express the feelings of brokenness and the search for wholeness caused by illness (p. 283). The absence of a parallel on Yom Kippur is surprising, but may be explained by the inclusion of Yizkor in that service.

The “Concluding Prayers of Confession,” following the Al *het*, found in its fullest form here at the Kol Nidre service, contains many creative elements. Heading the traditional list of biblical models for confession is now a paragraph about Hannah’s prayer. This lacks full literary parallelism with the received parts of this composition that follow because it is (necessarily) mostly a paraphrase of I Samuel 2 instead of directly employing biblical language (p. 239). New lines about key biblical women have also been incorporated into the following litany, and this is followed by a poem by Zelda, a modern Israeli poet, as well as a second, written originally in English by Alvin Fine.¹⁵ This is one of a number of loci where contemporary poetry, especially that by women, has been integrated into the main text.¹⁶ However, the Conservative movement’s expectation of a halakhically defined liturgy limits opportunities for such additions; most find expression in the left-hand margin instead.

14 “Liturgy in the Light of Jewish-Christian Dialogue,” *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 4 (2009): Langer CP 13, <http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/scjr/article/view/1541/1395>.

15 Pp. 240-42. Both of these poems, however, function better as introductions to the Mourner’s Kaddish, which is indeed where Alvin Fine’s poem appears in Reform liturgies. They are interpolated here between two litanies, begging God to respond to our prayers as God did to prayer of known people of merit. It is difficult to understand how these modern poems contribute to the theme of this liturgical section.

16 See also, pp 163-64, by Leah Goldberg.

There are additional smaller details that deserve praise and a shorter list, mostly of insignificant missed nuances in commentaries, that could be critiqued. These will not change the larger picture drawn above. Overall, *MLS* is a remarkable contribution to the Jewish liturgical scene, one that reflects and strives constructively to shape the Conservative Movement's identity for our times. The editors of this volume, under the leadership of Edward Feld, have addressed in superlative fashion the challenges confronting them: to present a mostly traditional Ashkenazi liturgy in a way in a way that demonstrates its relevance and spiritual richness to an intelligent community with diverse degrees of Jewish knowledge; to update this liturgy in ways that is coherent with the halakhic guidelines and liturgical precedents of the Conservative movement; and to respond to the reality of a community in which women are significant leaders and in which neither American Jews nor Conservative Jews live in insular communities. This it has done in a volume beautifully designed by Scott-Martin Kosofsky. We can only look forward to their future contributions to Jewish liturgical life.

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**Charles Davidson's *SEFER HADRAKHAH*:
An Annotated Guide and Commentary On the
Application of *Nusah ha-t'filah Beminhag Ash-
kenaz* For the Liturgical Year, Shabbat Settings
by Max Wohlberg. Second Edition, Ashbourne
Music, 2011.**

A Review/Essay by Sholom Kalib

The historical context

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, a number of documentations of the musical-liturgical tradition of West Central Europe appeared in publication, the most comprehensive of which was the Abraham Baer *Baal T'fillah*. It included within a single 358-page volume 1,448 musical examples covering complete services for every liturgical occasion of the year. The examples include, for the most part, one or two settings of each text in the German tradition. Most often they also include a setting representative of the Polish-German tradition. Also included are a relatively small number from the Portuguese tradition. Baer also provided footnote instructions regarding ritualistic procedures, as well as variations on them in diverse communities. Additional information is provided in appendices. No attempt at a similar work has appeared for approximately a century. Charles Davidson's *Sefer Hadrakhah* is a significant contribution toward that objective. A cursory overview reveals its apparent goal of serving as an updated representation of the Ashkenazi musical-liturgical tradition, as it evolved subsequent to its transplantation from the Old World in Europe to the New World and other continents during approximately the past century.

The first edition of this remarkable work has been used as a textbook at the Cantorial School of the Jewish Theological Seminary for the past year-and-a-half, and as a result, a significantly improved second edition is now available. This review/essay pertains to that revised edition.

As stated in the promotional materials, this work has been in the making for over 60 years, and it clearly reveals Hazzan Davidson's life-long scholarly work, as well as his four decades of experience as a hazzan and devoted Nathan Cummings Professor of *Nusah* and Liturgy at the Jewish Theological Seminary, above and beyond his illustrious achievements as a composer. The work also clearly reveals knowledge acquired from the hazzanic training

and curriculum developed by Hazzan Davidson's teacher and mentor, Max Wohlberg (z"l), evidenced not only in the totality of the Shabbat examples in the *Sefer Hadrakhah* and in the numerous other musical settings by Wohlberg throughout the book, but in the numerous references to his opinions on many details regarding various *nusahim*.

Whereas the Baer *Baal T'fillah* covers all liturgical occasions, the *Sefer Hadrakhah*— although covering most—omits several, most noticeably the daily weekday services. Whereas Baer provides musical examples for almost all prayer texts, the *Sefer Hadrakhah* contains merely 276. For the prayer texts for which no musical examples are given, the reader is referred either to an earlier example in the book employing the same *nusah*, or to outside sources, ranging from 1—8 referenced works, but mostly 3—4. These referenced works are listed for prayer texts for which musical examples are provided in the book as well as for those which are not. Many of the musical examples cover merely a portion of the chant at hand. The remainder of these chants, as well as many others for which no musical examples are provided are left to be improvised within the motivic or template pattern(s) presented in footnotes.

Like Baer, the *Sefer Hadrakhah* details in footnotes, lucidly and concisely, the ritualistic practices relating to the liturgical situation at hand, including customs of exchange between hazzan and *kahal* where applicable. Diverse traditions and *nusahim* relative to numerous texts are pointed out, and various *nusahim* for individual texts—as mandated by special liturgical occasions (e.g., *Lekhah dodi* during the period of *S'firat ha'omer*)—are presented. Also as in Baer, concise lists of the order of prayer texts and their *nusahim* for various liturgical occasions are presented.

The *Sefer Hadrakhah*, in addition, provides vital information on issues totally unaddressed by Baer. First of all, it states the scale-or mode-basis for every prayer section and individual text where applicable. Key motives within many *nusahim* are pointed out, and where applicable, modulatory patterns and the inclusion of secondary scale-or mode-bases are identified. Also described is the overall motivic structure for many *nusahim*. In a few High Holiday texts, the author points out individual words or phrases calling for special emphasis. Moreover, in the Glossary, the *Sefer Hadrakhah* defines the basic modes operative within the musical-liturgical tradition as a whole. Also in the Glossary, as well as in a number of commentaries throughout the book, the author cites scholarly opinions on various aspects of given *nusahim*, including those of Idelsohn and Werner, and more contemporary ones including Daniel Katz, Joseph Levine, Brian Mayer and Boaz Tarsi. For a few

texts, a brief history is also presented. In addition, traditions and customs related to, albeit extraneous to the liturgy proper are detailed, and occasionally the rationale for them is also given. The presentations are concise, thorough, clearly and beautifully presented, and are of immense value.

Other key differences between the Baer *Baal T'fillah* and the Davidson *Sefer Hadrakhah* relate to the area, period and resultant scope of their content. Baer dealt with the West Central European musical-liturgical tradition, and as the title of his monumental work indicates, it covered the domain of the *ba'al t'fillah*—a knowledgeable, musical and God-fearing lay prayer leader—in the broad sense of that designation, germane to the nineteenth century. It did not take into consideration advanced *hazzanut* of the Eastern European level or choral compositions. As the subtitle of the *Sefer Hadrakhah* indicates, it is designed to serve as a guide on the “*Application of Nusah ha-tefillah Beminhag Ashkenaz*,” and as stated in the Preface, the intent of the book is “to mirror certain European *Ashkenazi* traditions.” Neither the title nor the Preface clearly indicate whether the intent is to cover the tradition of West Central or Eastern Europe, or a combination of both. A cursory overview, however, reveals that for a number of texts, examples or footnote commentaries present both. Moreover, for a number of texts, examples are given of West Central European *nusahim* which were either merely optional in the Eastern European tradition (e.g., the *Na'anu'im* melody sung while waving the *lulav* and *etrog* in all directions during Hallel for Sukkot; Ex. 2.44d p. 55), or which were alien to it altogether (e.g., *Ka-amur ... Or hadash* and *Va-hav'eiinu l'shalom* in the Shaḥarit service of *Shalosh R'galim*, as well as *Kaddish shaleim* at the conclusion of those services (Examples. 12.23, 12.24 and 12.35, pp. 230—31 and 243, respectively).

For the most part, however, the examples given as well as the bulleted sources of classic published collections of hazzanic recitatives represent the Eastern European tradition, which was dominant in the United States and all other countries to which masses of Eastern European Jews immigrated from the closing decades of the 19th through the early decades of the 20th century. During the course of the 20th century, however, very much has taken place which has dramatically affected both the character and content of that tradition. Clarification of those changes is vital before addressing the musical content of the *Sefer Hadrakhah*.

As the musical-liturgical tradition of the Eastern European Synagogue evolved, it took place in an environment of persecution and negative prejudice against the Jewish population by the host community, a characteristic situation throughout most of Jewish history. The *kahal* of the Eastern European

synagogue consequently perceived its role as one of davening, placing its total trust in the merciful Father in Heaven. It perceived the role of the *sh'li'ah tsibbur* literally as the representative of the *kahal* in prayer, as its defense attorney, as it were, pleading the communal cause before the King of Kings. Above many an *Aron ha-kodesh* there appeared the Talmudic-based passage, *Da lifnei mi atah omeid* ("Know before Whom you stand"). The *kahal*, individually and collectively, felt comforted and strengthened emotionally by the experience of *hern tfiloh* (Yiddish, "listening to prayer"), i.e., to the chanted prayer of the *sh'li'ah tsibbur* as he interpreted it and brought its message to the hearts of the worshippers. Also greatly uplifting were renditions of texts of glorification. Renditions of texts of both supplication and glorification were also relished when performed by a choir, which consisted of men and boys. Particularly appealing were solos by boy sopranos and altos, as described in the autobiography of Zavel Kwartin, who actually credits his own childhood memories of them as his initial inspiration toward becoming a hazzan. This *kahal* had no thoughts about congregational singing or of participating in a service in any way other than by private davening and *hern tfiloh*.

The above attitude toward services prevailed for decades in the United States, and longer in the Lawndale District of Chicago's West Side than in most other parts of the country, the circumstance of which enabled this reviewer to experience it, uncompromised, during the decade from 1942—52. In that time and place there were two synagogues that engaged "star" *hazzanim* for the High Holidays, for Shavuot and Sh'mini Atseret, who were invariably assisted by 4-part choirs of the type mentioned. The two preeminent local *hazzanim* at that time were Todros Greenberg and Joshua Lind, and congregational singing was still essentially non-existent throughout the area. Uppermost of my impressions upon hearing Pinchik for the first time at a Shavuot service in 1943 included the choral singing of *Mimm'kom'kha* (from the *Shaharit K'dushah*) by Avraham Berkowitz ("Kalechnik"), Pinchik's rendition of the "small" *Av ha-rahamim* (... *hu y'raheim am amusim*) immediately preceding *Kri'at ha-torah*, but especially his rendition of *Umipp'nei hata'einu* (in the Musaf *hazarat ha-sha'ts*). This is a text which particularly touched the hearts of Eastern European Jews, and one which Pinchik excelled exceptionally in interpreting, hazzanically. As expected, his intonation brought elegant expression to the prayer text, which begins, "Because of our sins we were exiled from our lands," and a few lines down pleads "May it be Your will ... Merciful King, to return and extend mercy on us ... and speedily rebuild Your sanctuary and magnify its glory." At the words, *Va-havi'enu l'tsiyyon* ("And bring us back to Zion, Your city, in joy"), Pinchik slowly introduced the *Hatikvah*

melody in a meditative, prayerful tone, suggesting a dreamt realization of the prophetic vision. The striking association between the hope symbolized by the *Hatikvah* melody and the hope expressed in the *U-mipp'nei hata'einu* prayer was electrifying. Particularly in 1943, during World War II and the *Shoah*, the impact of that association cannot adequately be described. The assumption that the congregation would be joining in the singing of *Hatikvah*, which undoubtedly would be commonplace in 2011, was unthinkable in 1943. No one dared, however slightly, to infringe on the emotional height achieved by Pinchik's indescribably sublime rendition.

Other precious memories of such services include hearing Kwartin at a Sh'mini Atseret service in 1944. Highly memorable was the choral rendition in Hallel of Zeydl Rovner's glorious setting of *Hal'lu et Adoshem¹ kol g'goyim*, followed shortly by Kwartin's powerful rendition of the *Ribbono shel olam* meditation at the opened ark, pleading the requests in the text for divine guidance in the observance of His commandments and for protection from evil deeds and bad times that surge upon the world. In this selection, Kwartin employed the same approach as in his once celebrated recording of the similar *Ribbono shel olam* meditation recited on the High Holidays, characterized by the repeated dramatic interjections of the words *Ribbono, ribbono shel olam* (A minor:): d'-e' f'-e'-d' c'-b-a a c'-b-a d'-c', and the still more dramatic, occasional surge to the upper octave on those same words: a a'-a'-a' a'-a. This exceptional hazzanic chant was capped by the choir's singing of Zeydl Rovner's *L'kha adoshem hagg'dullah* which majestically accompanied the Torah procession led by Kwartin.

Another unforgettable experience was a Shavuot service in 1948 by Moshe Koussevitzky, shortly after his arrival in the United States. Among the highlights of that occasion, perhaps the most memorable was the inclusion of the cantorial-choral composition by Brody of the above-mentioned "small" *Av ha-rahamim*. Particularly stunning was Koussevitzky's joining the choir in the high octave, at the words *b'middah tovah y'shu'ah v'rahamim* toward the end of the composition ("[May our heart's desires be fulfilled] abundantly through salvation and mercy"), the melody of which began in the duple-meter E minor progression: d' d'-e'-b'-a' a'-g'-a'-g'-f#'-e' e' g'-f#'-e' g'-b' b'-a', etc. Another highlight was the cantorial-choral composition of *Ummipp'nei hata'einu* by Betzalel Brun.

To most readers of this review/essay, it may be difficult to imagine services in which congregational singing was non-existent and/or unwanted. Quite revealing, however, is the following excerpt from an article (in Yiddish, trans-

1 *Adoshem* is the reviewer's preferred transliteration for "God."

lated by this writer) entitled *Congregational Singing*, written in 1934 (Jewish Music, vol.1, no. 1) by Pinchas Jassinowsky (1886—1954), prominent hazzan and composer:

How could one explain to a hazzan, choir leader or respectable layman of the old school that in New York City, with the largest Jewish population and wealthiest Orthodox community in the United States a hazzan stands at the *amud*, and instead of singing fine choral music, he sings contemporary trivial melodies with the entire congregation? Instead of harmonic sounds, one hears simplistic, trite tunes. How could such a change have taken place? How is it possible to have exchanged tasteful choral music for such unrefined folkish music? One might think that merely this congregation has no taste or aesthetic predilection for fine music and cultured singing, and has therefore chosen such a bizarre style. The fact is, however, that today one finds [this situation] across the entire United States and Canada, and this radical change—of enormous significance—has been taking place within the last fifteen to twenty years, here in America.

Kwartin, in the closing pages of his autobiography (1952), similarly bewails the fact that *hazzanim* “have abandoned the exalted sanctity” of the older hallowed *hazzanut* and turned to the introduction of “cheap, tasteless tunes, to the disgrace of the holy sanctuary, which recalls such glorious times when the true, wonderful function of the hazzan prevailed.”

In response to the growing demand of the times, many prominent *hazzanim* assisted Moshe Nathanson in collecting and composing tunes designed for congregational singing. Entitled *Zamru Lo*, the first volume (for Friday Evening services) was published in 1955. A second volume (for the entire Sabbath Day) appeared in 1960, and a third volume for the High Holidays some years later. Similar volumes were subsequently composed and/or compiled by a number of other *hazzanim*. The *Zamru Lo* volumes consisted of numerous choices of melodies for most texts, including those traditionally chanted by the hazzan or choir. Many selections in the latter category, to some extent at least, amounted merely to rhythmicized elementary *nusah*.

Many others were excerpted melodic lines—stripped of their harmonies—from classic choral compositions. Revolutionary in conception, this movement constituted the first time in the history of synagogue music when the congregation was encouraged to sing so many and as lengthy selections, including complete segments of, as well as some entire prayer texts which had theretofore traditionally been the specific function of the *sh'liah tsibbur*. To be sure, precedents for congregational singing existed in a few older works: One finds, in the Baer *Baal T'fillah*, in Lewandowski's *Kol Rinnah U'tfillah*, and in A. B. Birnbaum *Amanut Hahazzanut*, short phrases specified for “choir and

congregation,” mostly of congregational responses, but nothing suggestive of anything of the likes of *Zamru Lo*. Even the now-popular Lewandowski *Magein avot* from the above-mentioned *Kol Rinnah U'tfillah* (p. 20, staff 7) contains the directive for “choir and congregation” only for the first 8 bars. The subsequent 13 bars, from *L'fanav na'avod* until the end, is specifically assigned to the hazzan.

Nathanson foresaw the possibility that with tunes provided for practically every text, that a congregation might opt to take over most if not all of a service. In the Foreword to *Zamru Lo*, Volume 2, Nathanson forewarned:

We remind those who would use this volume that a well balanced service represents the combined efforts of hazzan, choir, congregation, and rabbi. While settings will be found here for almost the entire Sabbath Prayer Book, it is not intended that every prayer be allotted to the congregation.

However, in the *Sefer Hadrakhah*, p. 50, footnote 35, dealing with Hallel Service, the author acknowledges:

In many American synagogues most, if not all, of Hallel is sung to melodies. Frequently the tunes are chosen for their congregational appeal rather than for their reflection of the texts. A judicious mixture of tunes and chant is suggested.

The reality is that congregants who demand participation through singing have been and increasingly continue to press for ever more tunes, “upbeat” tunes, and ever less *hazzanut*. A few among innumerable instances experienced by this reviewer will suffice to reveal the true nature of this phenomenon: At a modern Orthodox congregation this past Simhat Torah, the rabbi announced that the *Atah hor'eita* verses would be chanted by individual members of the congregation, adding: “Any musical genre is acceptable.” He himself then proceeded to “chant” the opening verse to the tune of *God Save the Queen* (see the *nusah* for *Atah hor'eita* in the *S. H.*, p. 291, Ex. 13.19). At an ordinary Shabbat Morning service in a Chabad synagogue, a young layman began the *Hatsi-kaddish* preceding Musaf with the traditional High Holiday opening motive 1-4-3#, followed by the rousing participation of the congregation in the now-popularized melody for *b'hayyeikhon uv'yomeikhon* from Shestopol's High Holiday composition for that *Hatsi-kaddish* (see *S. H.*, p.124, footnote 2). At another Shabbat Morning service, a hazzan and graduate of the cantorial school of the JTS, ignoring the major-mode basis for the *nusah* of the opening paragraphs of the *hazarat ha-sha"ts* (repetition aloud of the Amidah by the *sh'liah tsibbur*), led the congregation in the singing of the widely used High Holiday duple-meter melody for *M'khalkeil hayyim*, E minor: subtonic-B e—f#-g-g-g-g f#-e-f#-g e. At another *Shabbat Morning*

service, another hazzan and graduate of the cantorial school of the JTS, ignoring the major-mode basis for the *nusah* of the opening paragraphs of the *hazzarat ha-shat*'s (a repetition of the *Amidah* by the *shli'ah tsibbur*), led the congregation in singing the widely used High Holiday duple-meter melody for *M'khalkeil hayyim* to a different, more "upbeat" minor-mode triple-meter tune. Undoubtedly, the reader is keenly aware of countless similar and perhaps more egregious infractions against every aspect of *nusah ha-t'filah*.

In the *Sefer Hadrakhah*, although the author comments negatively on a few melodies he considers inappropriate to the content of a particular text, throughout the book he describes tunes sung congregationally as a matter of course, and by doing so, he is at least implicitly sanctioning their pervasive inclusion—and as integral to "*Nusah ha-tefillah Beminhag Ashkenaz*." In the Musaf service of Rosh Hashanah alone, for example, bulleted references to congregational tunes occur under 20 texts. More than that, however, his bulleted references throughout the book, being placed in alphabetical order by composer or compiler, in effect equate the validity and authenticity of congregational tunes as representative of *nusah ha-t'filah* with renditions by Alter, Katchko or other *hazzanim* of renown, as well as with time-hallowed choral compositions, on any given text. Such equal accreditation does not reflect the musical tradition of *Minhag Ashkenaz*, Eastern or West Central European, and does not "mirror" any Ashkenazi tradition.

By now, it must be apparent to readers that the views of this writer differ from some of today's generally accepted norms. What all scholars in the field of synagogue music share in common, however, is our strong desire to preserve our sacred musical heritage to the fullest extent possible. It is precisely that objective which moved Hazzan Davidson to devote a significant portion of his life to the creation of the *Sefer Hadrakhah* as well as this writer to devote countless hours studying it thoroughly in order to document resultant observations. Indeed, if the subject of this review were a work of lesser significance, any number of factors may well have been overlooked. The *Sefer Hadrakhah*, however, stands to represent nothing less than the very essence of our musical-tradition as a whole, to students as well as practicing *hazzanim* of our day as well as of perhaps untold generations to come. Integrity therefore demanded scrupulous examination of every statement, definition and example for accuracy or lack of it to whichever extent noted. Despite all that is most laudable in the book—which, in both quantity and quality, is decidedly great—and despite the profound respect this writer holds for the vast scholarship, talents and achievements of the author, the perceived obligation to be forthright in terms of scholarly truth—particularly indispens-

able in a work such as the *Sefer Hadrakhah*—demands candid addressing of numerous issues, detailed below.

Issues of textual interpretation

The first of these is one which was central to the improvisation, creation and performance of liturgical music in the Eastern European Synagogue, namely, *peyrush hamilos* (Hebrew, as used colloquially in Yiddish, “interpretation of the words”), which includes the general spirit and mood of a text, relative to particular liturgical occasions (discussed in Kalib: *The Musical Tradition of the Eastern European Synagogue*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 100). In the *Sefer Hadrakhah*, in defining the *Adoshem Malakh* Mode in the Glossary (p. 311), the author states that “some feel that the mode conveys an ethos of grandeur and majesty.” Whether the author does or not, this dimension remains essentially unaddressed in the commentary throughout the book. Evidence of its existence, however, can be illustrated in innumerable referenced selections. In fact, it is strikingly apparent in the very first prayer text presented in the book, which is also the first application of the *Adoshem Malakh* Mode, namely, in the bulleted setting by Katchko of the opening verse of Psalm 95 for *Kabbalat Shabbat* (*S.H.*, p. 2, and *Otsar Ha-hazzanut II*, p. 1, no. 1). Unlike all the other renditions of this verse presented or referenced in the book, which begin in the authentic range of the major mode, Katchko opens in the elevated plagal range, with the motive (C major:) g c’-c’ c’-c’-c’ c’-d’-e’, thereby dramatically interpreting the words *L’khu n’rann’nah ladoshem* (“Come, let us sing to God”), and rises further to the upper g’, interpreting the word *nari’a* (“let us resoundingly extol [the Rock of our salvation]”), and in this range concludes c’ c’-d’-e’-d’ f’-e’ c. The obvious objective of this rendition was to bring exalting majestic expression to these opening words of the *Kabbalat Shabbat* service.

Parenthetically, it is for this very reason that this writer wishes to respectfully disclaim credit as the source for the *Yedid nefesh* melody cited on page 1 of the *Sefer Hadrakhah*, immediately preceding Psalm 95. The melody was indeed cited in this writer’s *The Musical Tradition of the Eastern European Synagogue*, Vol. I, Part II, as illustration of a different misuse of this *zemer*. Precisely because the *nusah* for the opening Psalms 95—99 of the *Kabbalat Shabbat* service is in the exalted mode exemplified by the Katchko example, the lovely meditative, tranquil melody for *Yedid nefesh*, most appropriate for the traditionally subdued mood of *Shalosh S’udot*, is at least as inappropriate as a prelude to *Kabbalat Shabbat*.

Other instances of *nusahim* reflective of textual interpretation include Haz-zan Davidson's observation in connection with Psalm 97 (*S. H.*, p. 3, footnote 2), that despite the overall *Adoshem Malakh* modal basis for Psalms 95—99 as a whole, the Ukrainian Dorian Hexachord is often applied to Psalm 97:10 (*S. H.*, p. 3, Ex. 1.3) and Psalm 99:8 (*S. H.*, p. 4, Ex. 1.5). No explanation is offered. The textual content, however, clarifies the practice: The text of Psalm 97:10, *Ohavei ...* (“O lovers of God, despise evil, He guards the lives of His devoted ones, and rescues them from the hand of the wicked”), and that of Psalm 99:8, *Adoshem Elokeinu*,² *atah anitam* (“Lord, our God, You answered them”). These passages once evoked cautious hope within the Eastern European congregant, as well as the urge for intense prayer that they be fulfilled for him and for Jews everywhere, particularly in the face of ever-prevalent cruel persecution. These feelings simply found more poignant expression in the Ukrainian Dorian mode than in the ongoing major-mixolydian mode for *Kabbalat Shabbat*.

The above two mentioned instances, however, are not the only ones in which touches of the Ukrainian Dorian mode were interjected. Yehoshua L. Ne'eman includes it in Psalm 96:11 at the words *Yir'am hayyam u-m'lo'o* (“Let the sea and all that is in it thunder...before the Lord”) (*Nosah Lahazan II*, p.11, no. 5), and in stanzas 2 and 4 of *L'kha dodi*: at the words *ki hi m'kor habb'rakhah* (“For she [the Sabbath] is the source of blessing”) (*ibid.*, p. 14, no. 10), and at *Hitna'ari mei-afar kumi* (“Shake yourself off, arise from the dust!”) (*ibid.*, p. 15, no. 12). Both Katchko and Ne'eman also interject it in stanza 5, *Hit'or'ri*, at the words *ki va oreikh, kumi ori* (“For your light has come, arise in splendor!”) (Katchko: *Otsar II*, p. 6, no. 13, and Ne'eman, *Nosah II*, p. 16, no. 13). In each of these passages, the textual suggestion of divine emotional and/or physical support inspired the more intense expression inherent in the Ukrainian Dorian mode.

A number of other instances occur in the *Sefer Hadrakhah* in which the commentary describes pitch criteria which point directly to interpretive causes for their occurrence, but are not recognized as such. The author states that stanzas 3 and 6 of *L'kha dodi* (*Mikdash melekh* and *Lo teivoshi*) were formerly chanted in minor, as opposed to the other stanzas, which were in major (*S. H.*, p. 6, footnote 6). Actually the basic *nusah* for all the stanzas of *L'kha dodi* was merely a resumption—following Psalm 29 and *Anna b'kho'ah* (omitted in the *S.H.*)—of the original major-mixolydian mode of *Kabbalat Shabbat* (see Ne'eman, *Nosah II*, p. 15, no. 11 and p. 16, no. 14, respectively). However, because the *Mikdash melekh* stanza refers to the destroyed and

2 *Elokeinu* is the reviewer's preferred transliteration for “our God.”

deserted Temple and because *Lo teivoshi* addresses the Jewish people as downcast and disconsolate, *hazzanim* interpreted these stanzas in a minor mode. Their interpretations brought solace and hope to the masses to the extent that the minor mode became standard, virtually becoming the *nusah* of those verses. Typically, however, the concluding phrase in both of these verses returned to the original major-mode *nusah* (*S.H.*, p. 9, no. 1.10 [mm. 9—16] and p. 10, no. 1.13 [staff 2, from the d-natural on]). This *nusah*, with all its beautiful and meaningful subtleties, has been swept away by congregational tunes “in any tonality,” a phrase found in the subheading of *L’kha dodi* (*S.H.*, p. 6) as well as numerous other texts throughout the *Sefer Hadrakhah*. In the absence of any other stated criteria, one must assume that in these instances, at least, “anything goes,” as indeed is often the case in innumerable synagogues today.

A similar situation occurs in the description of the *nusah* of *Mimm’kom’kha* from the *K’dushah* of the *Shabbat Shaḥarit* service (*S. H.*, p. 43, Ex. 2.33, footnote 24), where the author describes the modulatory procedures commonly employed, but once again offers no explanation for them. They are, however, critical to an understanding and effective application of the chant. Here also, the basic *nusah* is in actuality merely a continuation of the major-third phrygian (*Ahavah Rabbah*) mode of the *Shaḥarit K’dushah* and *Hazarat hashah”ts* (see Ne’eman, *Nosah II*, p. 67). *Hazzanim*, however, in order to bring more intense interpretation to the text, very often—almost typically, though not always—began in the basic *A.R.* mode of the *nusah* (e.g., E major-third phrygian), typically modulating to the minor mode on the upper-fourth scale-degree (A minor) at the conclusion of the passage preceding the words *Matai timlokh b’tsiyyon* (“O when will You reign in Zion?”), as described by the author. However, in this elevated minor mode, the supplicatory mode would be employed in order to bring highly devotional prayer to those words, as they implied Messianic redemption to the Eastern European Jew. At the conclusion of this passage, in preparation for the next, which begins with the words *Titgaddal v’titkaddash* (“May You be exalted and sanctified”), modulation typically veered to the relative major mode of the preceding key (here C major) in order to bring a feeling of majesty to the exalting words of the text. Thus the modulatory pattern is not merely one of musical contrast, but far more profound.

The same difficulty is seen in the description of the modulatory procedure in the traditional chanting of *Hashkiveinu* (*S.H.*, p. 18, footnote 19). The modulatory procedures described, which are indeed typical, are again offered with no explanation, but occur for similar textual considerations. In

the case of *Hashkiveinu*, however, the introduction of the *A.R.* mode or the elevation of range to the key of the minor mode on the upper scale-degree 4 at the words *V'hagein ba-adeinu* (“And shield us and remove from us every enemy, plague, sword, famine and sorrow ...”) becomes meaningful when one considers the textual content and the societal and historical circumstances in which this hazzanic approach evolved. However, it is not merely the modulation to another mode or to an elevated range which is vital here, but rather the intensified emotional expression enabled by these modulatory movements. This is beautifully demonstrated in the once-famous recording by David Roitman. Incidentally, in that rendition, Roitman did not employ the major-third (*A.R.*) mode at all. In the minor mode entirely, he modulated twice: from the initial key of F minor to the upper fourth (B-flat minor) in the passage preceding *V'hagein ba-adeinu* (“Shield us”), which ends with the words *v'hoshi'enu l'ma'an sh'mekha* (“and save us for the sake of Your Name.”), and to an additional ascending fourth (to E-flat minor) at the words *V'haseir satan...* (“and remove any adversary... shelter us in the shadow of Your wings; for You, God, are our Guardian and Deliverer.”) Other issues relating to the presentation of this text in the *Sefer Hadrakhah*, however, call for attention to various other problems:

First of all, no musical example is given for the *Hashkiveinu* text, but footnote 18 (on p. 18) states merely “*Ahavah Rabba*,” yet of the 8 bulleted references, 6 open in minor. The subheading, however, does qualify: “In minor or in *Ahavah Rabbah*.” Significant, but not stated, however, is the fact that *Hashkiveinu*—in the Eastern European tradition—most typically begins in minor. Some settings indeed begin in *A.R.* (e.g., Rozumni, *Shirei Rozumni*, p. 17, no. 29). More typically, however, this would occur in the Ma’ariv service of the evening of Rosh Hashanah, bringing increased emotional intensity in deference to the Day of Awe (as in the bulleted reference to a setting by Zemachson, in Ephros, Vol. 6, p. 7), and of a weekday Ma’ariv service whose basic *nusah* is in the *A.R.* mode.

Parenthetically, the bulleted reference to the recitative by Zemachson does not belong in the Friday Evening service because it concludes within the *nusah* of the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Ma’ariv services, and therefore its unqualified inclusion within the *nusah* of *Ma’ariv l’shabbat* is misleading.

Secondly, footnote 19 opens with the statement: “The *hazzan* may begin and conclude the prayer or sing a cantorial solo.” Although it is traditional for the *hazzan* to conclude the text of *Hashkiveinu* or intone its entirety, it is also traditional for the *hazzan* to intone the opening words or verse of some texts. In the case of *Hashkiveinu*, however, those functions are not equal.

Whereas it is conceivable to intone the opening words or verse of practically any text, it is not traditional to do so for *Hashkiveinu* any more than for any other text within the Ma'ariv service.

More problematic for this reviewer, however, is the designation “solo” for a hazzanic recitative. In fact, it occurs throughout the *Sefer Hadrakhah*. It is true that Baer uses that designation liberally, but with no consistency: It appears in Baer for renditions of selections as un-soloistic as the *B'rakhot* for the weekday *Birkhot ha-shahar* as well as most texts of the ensuing *Hazarat ha-sha"ts* (though not all!) and does not appear for many other texts, with no apparent justification for or against the designation. In the *Sefer Hadrakhah*, however, the designation “solo” can signify only the exclusion of a choral rendition, or of a congregationally sung piece, because even the shortest, least “soloistic” chant is technically, at least, a “solo.” The word recalls only too painfully that identical designation as a derogatory, derisive slur by individuals antagonistic to anything suggestive of the hazzanic art. It would have been inconceivable for anyone to have referred to hazzanic renditions such as those cited above by Pinchik, Kwartin, Koussevitsky or Roitman as “solos,” suggesting merely “show pieces,” to the exclusion of their infinitely deeper function. Similarly regrettable is the author’s pervasive use of the adjective “soloistic” when referring to hazzanic embellishment. Whereas the latter signifies artistic sacred beautification, the former at least suggests egotistical self-indulgence.

Issues of *nusah*

Before citing problems with the presentation of the *nusah* of *Hashkiveinu*, others which occur earlier should be mentioned.

The first is the bulleted Lewandowski *L'khu n'rann'nah* (p. 2, under no. 1.1d). The piece is designed to be performed alternately, verse by verse, between hazzan and congregation. No mention is made of the fact that this mode of performance was common in West Central Europe only, and totally alien to Eastern European rendition (as acknowledged by Baer: *Baal T'fillah*, p. 89, no. 320). Obviously, it serves here merely as one more opportunity for congregational singing, irrespective of its encroachment on the traditional procedure and ambience of the Eastern European tradition.

The *nusah* for Psalm 97 (p. 3, no. 1.3) is categorized in its subheading as “In Ukrainian Dorian/*Adoshem Malakh*,” and the subheading for Psalm 99 (p. 4, no. 1.5) indicates “In Ukrainian Dorian/Major. These categorizations seem to imply a change in mode from the *Adoshem Malakh* modal basis for

the entire group of Psalms 95—99 in the *Kabbalat Shabbat* service. This inference, however, is misleading. The occasional inclusion of a passage in the Ukrainian Dorian mode is merely an option within the overall *Adoshem Malakh* mode. Definition of the mode must be sufficiently broad to include this occurrence, because it is included in numerous usages of the mode (e.g., in *Y'kum purkan* [Rozumni, *Shirei Rozumni*, p. 50, no. 61, mm. 10, 16—17, 22—23, 29—30 and 37]; and in *Mi she-asah nissim* [ibid., p. 57, no. 65, m. 15]; in *Y'hadd'sheihu* [Ne'eman, *Nosah II*, p. 97, no. 102, staves 1—2, and p. 98, staves 3, 7 and 8]; in *Al kein n'kavveh* [Kwartin, *Smiroth Zebulon*, Vol. 2, p. 68, no. 41, staves 3 and 7]; and in *Atah nigleita* [Kwartin, *Smiroth Zebulon*, Vol. 1, p. 46, no. 36, staff 4]; etc. The situation is analogous to a classical Sonata in C minor, for example, in which the typical tonal area for the subordinate theme is the relative major key (E-flat major). Such a piece, however, is never titled “Sonata in C minor/E-flat major.” On the other hand, if the subheadings of Psalms 97 and 99 in the *S.H.* are intended to inform the reader of the order of scale/mode-bases within those selections, neither begins in the Ukrainian Dorian mode, but rather with the 3—5 scale-degree succession of F major: a—c. Whichever the case, the Ukrainian Dorian mode is decidedly not the principle mode in these selections, as the subheadings suggest.

The subheading to Psalm 29 (p. 5) states: “In minor or in major.” It was intoned in major, however, only in West Central European synagogues. The footnote to the psalm (p. 5, footnote 5) proceeds to state that in Eastern Europe it was “often sung in minor.” However, in Eastern Europe this psalm was characteristically chanted in minor, not “often,” as to imply the existence of other options. One relatively rare exception was its intonation in the major-third phrygian (*A.R.*) mode. However, Ne'eman's rendition, in the latter mode (*Nosah II*, p. 12, no. 7), if read within a D minor key signature rather than D major-third phrygian, would serve as a model example of the minor-mode *nusah*. Moreover, in the final verse of the text, Ne'eman actually mutates to the parallel minor mode. Thus the less common usage of the major-third phrygian mode for this text may well be derived from the minor-mode *nusah*. The reason for the change in mode and *nusah* from the preceding major-mixolydian (*A.M.*) mode of Psalms 95—99 is once again understood from its textual context against the backdrop of the conditions of Jewish life in Eastern Europe:

In his commentary on Psalm 29, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks writes: “Its mood is significant. It describes an earth-shattering storm which subsides, so that the last word of the psalm is ‘peace.’ So will the storm of human history one day be transfigured into peace. Redemption stands to history as does the Shabbat

to the six days of creation.” (The *Koren Siddur*, p. 316, footnote). It is these considerations which resulted in the employment in the Eastern European synagogue of the warm, mystical Volhynian minor-mode *nusah* for this text, as well as for Psalms 92 and 93, for the conclusion of *Amar rabbi el'azar* and for *Ma'ariv l'shabbat*. Moreover, despite the general prevalence of other *nusahim* in various communities for the intonation of *Ma'ariv l'shabbat*, the Volhynian *nusah* was still retained for some texts within it, as explained below.

Perhaps as an intended example to illustrate a major-mode intonation of Psalm 29, the author's footnote 5 (p. 5) continues to state that the bulleted rendition by Alter “moves through *Adoshem Malakh*, Ukrainian Dorian and major before concluding in minor.” This description, however, is misleading. The recitative (in Alter, *The Sabbath Service*, p. 5) indeed begins in D major, in the major-mixolydian mode *nusah* of the preceding psalms. This usage of the major mode, however, is not at all typical of Eastern European practice, but rather a hazzanic stunt—a frequent occurrence in Alter—designed here as an unexpected opening (to a knowledgeable congregant) which momentarily links with the preceding *nusah*. Already in bar 3, the c-natural serves as a pivotal note to the ensuing minor mode: initially perceived as the mixolydian scale-degree 7, in the context of what follows immediately it functions as scale-degree 7 of the parallel D minor mode, in which key the recitative essentially remains (from bar 3) until the end of the piece. The Ukrainian Dorian mode is nowhere in evidence. Undoubtedly, the author was referring to the major-third phrygian mode, here A major-third phrygian, which appears at the beginning of bar 13 (on the word “*omeir*”). This instance, however, does not constitute “moving through” a modulatory area, because such a momentary application of the lower tetrachord or pentachord of the major-third phrygian scale to scale-degree 5 of an overall minor (or major-third phrygian) tonality is simply a common occurrence in *nusahim* within those modes (explained in Kalib: *The Musical Tradition of the Eastern European Synagogue*, Vol. I, Part I, Ex. 138b, p. 133, and Part II, p. 142).

Similarly, the short passage in the major mode on scale-degree 4 (G major here, in mm. 14 [last 3 notes]—18) is merely a typical passing phase which is frequently employed in minor (and major-third phrygian) *nusahim* within an overlying 5—6—4—8—5 Study-mode motive, here: A (m. 14)—B (mm. 15—16)—G (m. 16)—D (mm. 17—21)—A (m. 22) (cf. *ibid.*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 134, and Part II, p. 104, Ex. 103j, mm. 4—7). Thus the Alter recitative is set securely within the Eastern European parameters of the minor-mode Volhynian *nusah*, which include the mentioned inherent modulatory digressions.

The refrain melody for *L'kha dodi* on p. 7, Ex 1.7a (a'-a' c"-c" f'-g'-a'), is erroneously credited to Sulzer. Rather, it is the melodic line of a choral setting of the textual refrain by Sonntag. Sonntag's setting also includes 5 stanzas of the poem, found in numerous handwritten *partitura* choral collections of Eastern European *hazzanim*. (The original setting of the refrain is included in the Kalib *Musical Tradition*, Vol. I, Part II, Ex. 164a, p. 193, and stanzas 6 and 9 are included in the same volume, Part II, Exs. 171a and b, pp. 205—6).

In the coverage of the *nusahim* for *Ma'ariv l'shabbat*, the author initially (on pp. 14—16) describes the one in most common usage as “East European style,” and subsequently (on pp. 17—18) refers to it merely as “minor.” Ambiguity results, however, when encountering usages of the Volhynian *nusah* in a number of subsequent bulleted references, which are likewise in “minor,” and are also Eastern European. The two minor-mode *nusahim*, however, are easily distinguishable—irrespective of other distinctions—in that the more common *nusah* is in the plagal range of the minor scale, whereas the Volhynian is in the authentic range. Moreover, the more common *nusah* was widely referred to as the Lithuanian, as seen in Ephros (*Cantorial Anthology*, Vol. 4, pp. 85, 86 and 102), Katchko (*Otsar II*, p. 16 ff.), and Ne'emán (*Nosah II*, Foreword).

This problem of ambiguity surfaces first in reference to *Ahavat olam* (p. 17). No musical example is given, and bulleted references to both Alter and Katchko are recitatives (“solos”) which open in the Volhynian authentic-range minor mode. Moreover, they represent quite different approaches from each other, which, in the absence of footnote clarification, will be incomprehensible to the reader of limited background. The recitative of Katchko represents the standard Eastern European approach to hazzanic treatment not only of *Ahavat olam*, but to numerous other texts as well, including *Hashkiveinu*. Although various prayer texts—due to their individual particularities—typically require variations in the deployment of the pattern, the common element is the opening section in the authentic-range and devotionally expressive minor mode, followed by a more emotionally intense section in the elevated range of the minor mode on scale-degree 4. This approach to *Ahavat olam* is seen in Kwartín, *Tefillot Zevulun*, p. 28, Ex. 63; in Joshua Lind, *An Anthology of Hazzanic Recitatives*, p. 8; Rozumni, *Shirei rozumni*, p. 15, no. 25; Schaposchnik, *An Anthology of Hazzanic Recitatives*, p. 24; and many others.

Whereas Katchko in general—practically without exception—adheres to the most direct and authentic presentation of a *nusah*, Alter frequently seeks to surprise the knowledgeable congregant by momentary digressions from the norm. If not explained, the reader will be left with the impression

that such digressions are simply other staple elements of a *nusah*, and will be misled into thinking that “anything goes.” Similar to Alter’s opening of his setting of Psalm 29, he begins *Ahavat olam* with a motive characteristic of the preceding *nusah*—in this instance the Lithuanian—namely, the *Keil*³ *hai v’kayyam* motive, which is followed immediately in bar 2 with the Volhynian authentic-range *nusah*. The recitative remains in this latter mode through the words *otanu limad’ta*, as does Katchko’s. Differently from Katchko, however, at the words *Al kein* (“Therefore”), instead of modulating to the minor mode on scale-degree 4, Alter moves to the relative major mode (G major), rendering expression to the joy implied in the words *v’nismah... toratekha* (“... we will rejoice in the words of Your Torah”). This approach, although not unique here, is to some extent exceptional. Far more exceptional, however, is Alter’s subtle inclusion of the *Akdmut* motive precisely at those words (mm. 27 [last two notes]—29), associating the *leitmotif* of Shavuot, the occasion of the giving of the Torah, with the cited words in *Ahavat olam*. The recitative then reverts to the original authentic-range minor-mode Volhynian *nusah*, concluding with the words *yomam va-lailah*. Katchko also concludes at these words, but in the elevated plagal range of this mode. Whereas Katchko, having concluded in the plagal-range minor mode, brings the concluding verse and *b’rakhah* via the parallel plagal-range major-mode *nusah* (termed “Western European Variant” in the *Sefer Hadrakhah*), Alter returns to the Lithuanian *nusah*.

Footnote 16 (p. 17) states that “*Ve’ahavta* is often chanted to the *Shabbat* system of Torah cantillation,” and reference to *Ve’ahavta* in every subsequent evening and morning service throughout the *Sefer Hadakhah* reverts to this footnote. This practice, however, is alien to any musical tradition of *Minhag Ashkenaz*, Eastern or West Central European. It is simply nothing more than an opportunity for congregational singing.

Footnote 14 (p. 17) states that if one chants *Bar’khu* in the Lithuanian (“minor”) or either of the major-mode (Central European) *nusahim*, the selected *nusah* should be continued until *Hashkiveinu*. First of all, although *hazzanim* typically followed that procedure, lay *ba’alei t’fillah* who employed the Lithuanian *nusah* typically did so beyond *Hashkiveinu*, through the *Hatsi kaddish* preceding the silent *Amidah* (see Ne’eman, *Nosah II*, pp. 23—25, Exs. 26—28; also Idelsohn, *Thesaurus*, Vol. 8, p. 11, Ex. 39). Similarly, *ba’alei t’fillah* who employed the older Central European major-mode *nusah* continued it through *Hashkiveinu* (see Ne’eman, *Nosah II*, p. 29, no. 35). Katchko, however, after employing the newer plagal-range major-mode *nusah* from *Bar’khu* on, turns to the Volhynian minor-mode *nusah* in the preceding text, *V’ne’emar*,

3 *Keil* is the reviewer’s preferred transliteration for this variant of “God.”

ki fadah Adoshem... (“And it is further said: ‘For God has redeemed...’”; *Otsar II*, p. 15, no. 30), in anticipation of that *nusah* for *Hashkiveinu*. Similarly Alter, although having begun *V’ne’emar, ki fadah Adoshem...* in the Lithuanian *nusah*, departs from it, modulating to the authentic-range Volhynian mode in order to conclude the selection in it, and thereby also anticipate the *nusah* of *Hashkiveinu* (Alter, *The Sabbath Service*, p. 16, mm. 7–12).

Footnote 19 (p. 18) states that “the concluding *berakhah* [of *Hashkiveinu*] may be in the tonic minor or in major on the fourth scale-degree,” and that the *Keil hai v’kayyam* motive can be used at *u-f’ros aleinu*. The newer major-mode *nusah*—whose plagal range coincides with the major key on the fourth scale-degree relative to the typical authentic-range minor mode with which *Hashkiveinu* renditions most typically begin—could conceivably include the *Keil hai v’kayyam* motive, as seen in Katchko in preceding texts (*Otsar II*, pp. 12–15, nos. 23, 25 and 28). However, neither Katchko nor any of the bulleted references, nor any other Eastern European hazzan employed this mode for *Hashkiveinu*. The inclusion of the *Keil hai v’kayyam* motive at *u-f’ros aleinu* could occur only in the Lithuanian *nusah* or in the older major-mode Central European *nusah* (both of which contradict the author’s footnote 14 [on p. 17]).

In the subheading for *V’sham’ru*, one reads “In minor or in major (p. 18).” Settings in major typically occur in West Central European sources, but only with rare exception in Eastern European. In the latter, although settings are by far primarily in the Volhynian minor mode, one does occasionally encounter settings partially in major-third Phrygian (*A.R.*), and at times in their entirety.

For *Kiddush*, footnote 25 (p. 21) reads: “Lewandowski’s setting and tune for ‘*Ki vanu vakharta*’ remain favorites.” Although true, when *hazzanut* flourished, that setting was seldom if ever heard in the Eastern European synagogue because it lacked the level of majestic expression and hazzanic ornamentation as seen in the referenced settings, particularly those of Katchko and Zemachson.

In commenting on settings for *Birkhat Kohanim* in the *Hazarat ha-sha”ts* in footnote 32 (p. 49), the author states that “the Ne’eman setting is in minor.” In fact, Ne’eman presents two settings. The one referred to here (Ne’eman, *Nosah II*, p. 84, Ex. 90), indeed in minor, is used only when *Dukh’nen*⁴ occurs, which on an ordinary *Shabbat* takes place only in the Land of Israel. Ne’eman’s *nusah* when *Dukh’nen*⁴ does not take place is on his p. 82, Ex. 39,

4 *Dukh’nen*: Yiddish colloquial usage for the Hebrew *dukhan*, a raised platform from which *Kohanim* (Aaronide Priests) would pronounce the daily Priestly Blessing in the Second Jerusalem Temple; today it refers to a ritual re-enactment on Festivals and High Holidays in diaspora synagogues.

which is in the regular major-third phrygian (A.R.) mode for *Hazarat hashat's* on *Shabbat*.

In the Hallel section, p. 51, footnote 37, a 5-point *nusah* template is given for Psalm 113 (*Hal'luyah, hal'lu avdei Adoshem*), which is repeated for the ensuing 4 selections of Hallel in footnotes 38—41: for Psalm 114 (*B'tseit yisrael*); for Psalm 115:1—11 (*Lo lanu, Adoshem*); for Psalm 115: 12—18 (*Adoshem z'kharanu*); and for Psalm 116: 1—11 (*Ahavti*). Although the template is surely not inaccurate as a basic approach to the intonation of the concluding section of a Hallel psalm, very little of the 5 given template criteria is employed by any of the bulleted references in any single selection. The problem is that the template is too circumscribed to cover the myriad possibilities for the *nusah* of Hallel lying within the memory recesses of an Alter, Berkowitz, Ganchoff, Katchko, Kwartin, Wohlberg, Zemachson (included in the referenced selections in the *Seder Hadrakhah*). Indeed, no hazzan of their accomplished level would rigidly follow such a template for 5 successive selections.

For *Hodu* (Psalm 118:1—4) in Hallel (p. 54), the subheading states: "In major or in minor." In the Eastern European synagogue it was, with little exception, sung in minor. The usages of tunes for special occasions, e.g., *Maoz tzur* on Hanukkah, *Adir hu* on Pesah, etc. (the only musical examples given [pp. 54—55, nos. 2.44a through d]), was characteristic of West Central European synagogues, but uncommon in Eastern European synagogues. The primary exception, as mentioned earlier, was the *Na'anu'im* melody on Sukkot.

In the *nusah* for *Y'hadd'sheihu* ("May God renew it"; in *Seder Birkhat ha-hodesh, Seder Hadrakhah*, p. 63), footnote 62 states:

If there will be a Festival, *Chanukah* or *Tisha BeAv* in the new month, the tune associated with that occasion is sung at *Yechadeshehu: Adir Hu* before *Pesah*; etc.

This is true only of Lewandowski (*Todah Wesimrah*, pp. 122—23). It is not part of any Ashkenazic musical-liturgical tradition, West Central or Eastern European, found in the literature.

The subheading for *Y'hal'lu/Hodo* (p. 64), correctly states: "In major." The bulleted references to Ephros, Vol. IV, however, direct the reader to settings by Herbert Fromm (p. 307) and Ephros himself (p. 311). Fromm's is in a twentieth-century neo-modal idiom. The Ephros setting of *Y'hal'lu* is in minor, and the first half of his setting of *Hodo* is also in minor, followed in the second half in the parallel mixolydian mode. The Ephros setting is harmonized in a relatively progressive mid-20th century idiom, but not to the extent employed by Fromm. Both, however, interesting as they are musically, are alien to the

traditional major mode and majestic expression of the *nusah*, so illustriously exemplified in the marvelous choral settings of *Hodo* by Sulzer and Lewandowski, which were parenthetically adopted and included as standard in the choral repertoire of the Eastern European synagogue. Of these settings, the *Sefer Hadrakhah* refers only to the melodic line of the Sulzer, included in Katchko (*Otsar II*, p. 82, no. 120).

Similarly, for *Mizmor l'david*, the heading correctly states: "In major." However, the bulleted reference to the Jacob Weinberg setting in Ephros (Vol. 4, p. 312), is again written in a mid-20th century idiom, neo-modal, far from the traditional mode and spirit associated with the Torah-procession to the Ark.

Under the title *Hu Elokeinu ... v'hu yashmi'einu* (p. 67), footnote 71 reads: "Ne'eman notates in *Adoshem Malakh* and concludes in Ukrainian Dorian." In Ne'eman (*Nosah II*, p. 106), the selection begins from *Sh'ma yisrael*—not *Hu Elokeinu*—which is in the Ukrainian Dorian mode. The ensuing phrase *Hu Elokeinu* begins in major, but then turns to Ukrainian Dorian, in which mode it remains only through the words *hu moshi'einu*. At the words *v'hu yashmi'einu*, a change in mode takes place to the major-third phrygian (*A.R.*), in which mode it remains until the end of the text.

The *nusah* of Exs. 12.27 and 12.28 (pp. 235—36) by Baer-Davidson for the Shaḥarit *K'dushah* of Pesah (1st Day, and by inference for the other days of Pesah, as well as for Shavuot or Sukkot) is totally alien to the Eastern European tradition.

For *Tik'u va-hodesh shofar* in the Rosh Hashanah Ma'ariv service, (p. 85), once again no musical example is given, and the subheading states: "In major or in minor." Most settings, by far, are strictly in major, consistent with the overall major-mode *nusah* of the service. Of all the bulleted references, the setting by Sulzer employs the parallel minor mode only in mm. 3—4, and the Schorr 16-bar setting employs it only in mm. 7—12. These instances simply allude artistically to the solemnity perceived by this first reference in the liturgy to the sound of the *shofar*. The remainder of these settings and the totality of practically all others, including all the bulleted ones, are in major.

Issues of modality

Mention should be made of some of the author's attributions of modal status to momentary passages. For example, in the Glossary, p. 312, footnote 10, the author cites 5 passages within an unequivocal minor scale-basis which descend scalewise across the leading-tone to subtonic scale-degree 5, and describes them as illustrations of "a melodic pattern in *Ahavah Rabbah* below the tonic." One of the cited examples is 4.8., the Wohlberg setting for

Shir hama'alot (Psalm 130) from Rosh Hashanah Shaharit, p. 95, staff 2. The footnote refers to the stepwise descent, (F minor:) f—C across the leading-tone, e-natural. This progression, however, is followed immediately by a scalewise ascent, C—a-flat, concluding via descending-third to the tonic note, f. Consideration of this passage as in C major-third phrygian (*A.R.*), however, is possible only when viewing it in isolation, totally out of context. Within its context, however, this passage as well as each of the others cited in the footnote is nothing more than a normal scalewise progression within the key, and in no way a digressive modulatory occurrence.

Similarly, in the Glossary, p. 312, under the heading of the “Festival *Amidah* Manner,” the author states that “it includes a natural minor scale, the Ukrainian Dorian Hexachord, and movement to a temporary tonal center on the relative major.” In both examples given in the *Seder Hadrakhah*, 12.30a and b, pp. 236—37, there is no inclusion of the Ukrainian Dorian mode at all, and although there are turns to scale-degree 3, they are insufficiently decisive to be perceived as modulatory to the relative major key. It is true, however, that in bulleted renditions the augmented 4th scale-degree does occasionally replace the diatonic scale-degree 4, and both the augmented 4th and major 6th (of the Ukrainian Dorian mode) also occur in the Festival *Amidah* manner, albeit relatively rarely. Likewise, there are instances when scale-degree 3 is preceded by a tonicizing fourth below, effecting a momentary turn to the relative major tonality. These, however, also appear only occasionally, and it is misleading to generalize beyond that. Indeed, the author may well have intended to inform the reader that the subsidiary tonal areas mentioned are part of the totality of the “Festival *Amidah* Manner,” but without clearly stating so, the given impression is that each selection must include them, which is obviously not the case.

The definition of the “Ukrainian Dorian Hexachord” in the Glossary, p. 314, “describes a musical phrase not exceeding six notes... “ The Ukrainian Dorian mode, however, is an 8-note, not a 6-note scale, varying segments of which frequently appear in synagogue music, ranging from a single augmented scale-degree 4 to descending spans 5—1, major-6—1, minor-7—1 to the full octave, 8—1, and sometimes merely 8—3.

In musical examples or bulleted references within *Seder Hadrakhah*, the simple embellishing augmented scale-degree 4 is seen in Katchko within the “Festival *Amidah* Manner” at the words *ahavta otanu* (“You loved us”; *Otsar II*, p 129, no. 174), and this same gesture appears several times throughout the *Hazarat ha-sha”ts*. A slightly broader usage of this gesture, namely, 5—4#—3, is employed by Alter in Hallel (*Mi kadoshem Elokeinu*—“Who is like the Lord our God?”—*The Sabbath Service*, p. 44, mm. 1—2); the hexachord, major-6—1,

is seen in *S.H.*, p. 4 within *Kabbalat Shabbat*, Psalm 99, beginning of the second staff, and in Katchko within the “Festival *Amidah* Manner” at the words *mippi aharon u-vanav* (*Otsar II*, p. 135, no. 184); the 7—1 segment appears in Alter in Hallel (*Shuvi nafshi*—“Return, my soul”—*The Sabbath Service*, p. 45, mm. 1—6), and in Katchko within *Kabbalat Shabbat* (*Ohavei Adoshem ... yatsileim*—“O lovers of God... He will rescue them”—*Otsar II*, p. 2, no. 4); examples of the 8—3 segment are seen in Alter in Hallel (at the words *Yir’ei Adoshem bithu vadoshem*—“Let those who fear god, trust in God”—*The Sabbath Service*, p. 45, mm. 1—2), and in Katchko within *Kabbalat Shabbat* (at the words *ki va oreikh, kumi ori*—“for your light has come, arise in splendor”—*Otsar II*, p. 6, no. 13).

Examples of the full octave-range are Psalm 97 from *Kabbalat Shabbat* by Zemachson (Ephros, Vol. 4, p. 28, mm. 1—7); *Mi she-beirakh* by Alter (*The Sabbath Service*, p. 54, mm. 21—22 [on the word *u-mi*—“and those”]); in *Sh’ma yisrael* from *Shabbat*: Musaf *K’dushah* by Ne’eman (*Nosah II*, p. 106); in Psalm 116 from Hallel: *Ki hillatsta nafshi*—“for You have delivered my soul”—by Berkowitz (Ephros, Vol 4, p. 253, mm. 2—5); in *M’lokh* from Rosh Hashanah: Musaf by Rosenblatt (*Tefiloth Yosef*, pp. 36—37, mm. 23—25 [at the words *‘kadd’sheinu ... b’toratekha’*—“sanctify us... with Your Torah”]); in *Atah zokheir* (b) from Rosh Hashanah Musaf by Katchko (*Otsar III*, at the words *‘ki hok l’yisrael hu mishpat leilokei ya’akov’*—“for it is Israel’s law, a decree from the God of Jacob”); in *V’al y’dai avadekha* (*Zikhronot*—“Remembrance Section”) from Rosh Hashanah Musaf by Alter (*The High Holiday Service*, p. 67, bottom 3 staves); and in *Ya’aleh* from Yom Kippur Eve by Alter (*ibid.*, p. 89, mm. 1—6). Thus the “Ukrainian Dorian Hexachord” is merely one segment among several others within the 8-note scale employed in synagogue music.

A similar problem exists with the definition of the *Viddui* (“Confessional”) Mode in the Glossary, p. 314, defined as a pattern referring “to a sequential, diatonic, descending series in major or in minor (5—4—5—4—3 3—2—3—2—1) ... “ Footnote 19 adds that “it appears in *Tavo l’fanekha* and *Ashamnu* (6:18 and 6:19, pp. 161—62).” The footnote continues to list 4 other usages of the given motive as other examples of “the *Vidui* Mode,” listed below. First of all, the assumed prototype in the Yom Kippur *Viddui* texts—namely, 5—4—5—4—3 3—2—3—2—1—is not present in either Ex. 6:18 or 6:19 (pp. 161—62). In both texts (*Tavo l’fanekha* and *Ashamnu*), the motivic succession is: 5—4—3 4—3—2 4—3—2 3—2—1. Yes, the motives are related by virtue of common descending 3-note scalewise segments within the 5—1 span of the major scale. However, the difference between one branching off from scale-degrees 5 and 3 only, as opposed to the other with 3 segments branching off from scale-degrees 5, 4 and 3, respectively, is significant. This is particularly

true in view of the fact that in all the other 4 mentioned references to the common motive, no deviation from the pattern appears whatsoever. The only direct quotes of the alleged prototype motive within the *Viddui* texts of Yom Kippur occur in Ephros, *Anu azei fanim* (Vol. 2, p. 21, mm. 11–12) and in Alter, *Tavo l'fanekha* (*High Holy Day Service*, p. 108, mm. 5–6). The motive is obviously an option within the *nusah*, but in view of its rarity in its unvaried form— and totally absent in all renditions of *Ashamnu* and in most renditions of *Tavo l'fanekha* (including those of Baer, Katchko, Ne'eman, Spiro, Weisgal and Zilberts), the motive cannot be assumed to be the prototype of the other usages of it, and of course not the primary motivic content of “the *Viddui* mode.”

Rather, all of the above-cited usages of the 5–4–5–4–3 3–2–3–2–1 motive are in the category of “wandering motives,” the vital consideration of which is, in the words of Hazzan Israel Fuchs (z”l), “their *sh'kheinim* (‘neighbors’),” i.e., their contexts. When, for example, it functions as scale-degrees 7–6–7–6–5 5–4–5–4–3 of a minor scale, the motive unequivocally signals the *Hatsi-kaddish* and *Avot* of *Tal/Geshem* (*S.H.*, p. 246, no. 12.37, fourth staff; and p. 247, no. 12.38, staves 2–3); when it functions as 5–4–5–4–3 3–2–3–2–1 of a major scale, it may signal the pre-cadential motive of *Hatsi-kaddish* of the Evening services of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (*S.H.*, p. 87, fourth staff)—and also *Barukh Adoshem hamm'vorakh* following *Bar'khu* in the same Evening services, employed by Baer and Lewandowski (though not mentioned in the *S.H.*), and/or the *Viddui nusah* of *Tavo l'fanekha* (cited above). These last usages (as 5–4–5–4–3 3–2–3–2–1 of a major scale), however, are not at all standard. Although obviously employed by some, most do not include it. And as mentioned, this motive is not at all standard in the *Viddui* texts. When, on the other hand, the motive functions as 5–4–5–4–3 3–2–3–2–1 in a minor mode, it unequivocally signals the *Hatsi-kaddish* preceding *Bar'khu* (*S.H.*, p. 93, no. 4.6, fifth staff, as well as one or two other optional texts) in the *Shaharit* service of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur; and when functioning as 8–7–8–7–6# 6#–5–6#–5–4 in the subtonic range of a minor scale, it unequivocally signals the *Hatsi-kaddish* and *Avot* of the *Neilah* service of *Yom Kippur* (*S.H.*, p. 192, no. 10.1. The 6# [f# in the key of A minor] constitutes the inclusion of the Dorian scale-degree 6—replacing the diatonic scale-degree 6 [f-natural]—resulting in a major pentachord over scale-degree 4, [d, in A minor] within the overall minor scale).

Issues of omission

A number of noticeable omissions in the *S.H.* should be mentioned. As stated earlier, there is no section devoted to the daily weekday services. The descriptions of prayer modes in the Glossary attribute no differences to their various applications. For instance, the weekday Ma'ariv service as well as the Shaḥarit services of weekdays, Shabbat and Festivals (from *V'khulam pot'khim et pihem* through *Tsur yisrael*), are all in the major-third phrygian mode (*A.R.*), but there are subtle as well as not so subtle differences in their applications (discussed in Kalib: *The Musical Tradition of the Eastern European Nusah*, Vol. II, Part IV, pp. 129—31). Clearly, a better understanding and feeling for the Shabbat usages (as well as others, especially High Holiday applications) of the mode would be gained by a prior careful study of the weekday usages of it.

Among the bulleted references for *Tsur yisrael* in the Shabbat (and Festival) Shaḥarit service (*S.H.*, p. 40), a setting by Katchko (*Otsar II*, p. 47, no. 80) is included. This setting, however, is Katchko's second recitative for that text, one that is essentially basic *nusah*, as an alternative to his first setting (p. 46, no. 79) which is richly hazzanic. Because the text directly pleads: "Rock of Israel, arise to the aid of Israel, and redeem Judah and Israel, as You promised ...," its rendition by a gifted hazzan formerly spoke directly to the heart of the Eastern European Jew, and numerous advanced-hazzanic settings were composed for it, as evidenced by a number of once widely known recordings by Chagy, Sholom Katz, Kwartin, Rosenblatt and Vigoda. The first setting by Katchko is beautifully representative of this level, and its omission from the referenced settings simply reflects the fact that *Tsur yisrael* is sung congregationally almost universally, typically to the tune cited in the *S.H.* (p. 40, footnote 20), thereby making even the simpler Katchko setting essentially obsolete, let alone the highly hazzanic one. However, maintaining consistency with the citing of "solos" for numerous other texts in the *S.H.* would have called for the inclusion of one of higher hazzanic level for a text as vital to the history of synagogue music as *Tsur yisrael*.

Other omissions are a number of prayer texts which once aroused elevating spiritual experiences for Jewish masses, particularly when intoned by a gifted hazzan and/or choir. Most noticeable of these include: the small *Av ha-raḥamim* (*hu y'raheim am amusim*) immediately preceding the reading of the Torah (renditions of which by Pinchik and Moshe Koussevitzky were cited earlier); *Ribbono shel olam*, included on Festivals and the High Holidays following *Adoshem*, *Adoshem* (a rendition of which by Kwartin was cited earlier); *Ribbono Shel Olam* of *S'firat Haomer*, two model examples of which are Pinchik's once-celebrated recording and the choral setting by Samuel Alman in his *Synagogue Compositions*, Part I, p. 70, no. 23; the texts beginning with

the words *Ribbono shel olam* from *Yom Kippur katan*, so eloquently intoned by a number of exemplary *hazzanim*, included in Kalib, *The Musical Tradition*, Vol. II, Part Two, pp. 585—603; and *L'david mizmor* (Psalm 24), included on the Ma'ariv services of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur via a special *nusah* immediately preceding *Kaddish shaleim*, so inspiringly exemplified in recorded renditions by Kwartin and Roitman.

In the listing of prayer texts from the *Malkhuyot* (“Kingship”) section of Rosh Hashanah Musaf, that of *V'al y'dei avadekha* is omitted. One setting of it is, however, subsumed within the bulleted excerpted portion in Ephros Vol. 6, p. 6 of *Malkhuyot* by David Hornstein. Two others, by Katchko and Kwartin, are also included in the same bulleted Vol. 6 by Ephros (pp. 160 and 161). Parenthetically, the one by Kwartin is “revised and edited by G.E. [Gershon Ephros],” in which all original word repetition and coloraturas are either expunged or truncated to the point of near non-recognition. One must wonder: if references in the *S.H.* include unabridged recitatives at the level of Katchko's *Adoshem malakh* and *Hashkiveinu* (see bulleted references in *S.H.*, pp. 14 and 18) and Rozumni's *Tikanta shabbat* and *Atah yatsarta* (*S.H.*, pp. 67 and 69) and many more, why would one choose such a tastelessly mutilated version of one of the most celebrated hazzanic recordings—stripped of its dramatic power, elegance and vitality—when reference could just as easily have been made to the original in Kwartin's own *Smiroth Zebulon*, Vol. 2, p. 70, no. 42!

Similarly, in the *Shofarot* (“Revelation”) section of Rosh Hashanah Musaf (p. 136), *V'al y'dei avadekha* is omitted not only in the listing of prayer texts, but in the referenced sources as well.

Also necessary of mentioning is the limited scope of selections presented and/or referenced in the *S.H.* for large segments of the liturgy. Inasmuch as many advanced- hazzanic recitatives are referenced in numerous sections, as are some once-standard choral compositions, especially in the sections for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, their paucity and/or practically total omission from other sections constitute a serious inconsistency. In the above-cited article, “Congregational Singing” by Pinchas Jassinowsky, one possible explanation offered for the replacement of choral music by congregational tunes is the weakened perception of the sanctity of Shabbat in America, of its having become *vokhedig* (Yiddish, “mundane”). Indeed, in the *Sefer Hadrakhah* the entire Shabbat Evening Service is devoid of reference to any choral composition. In the Shabbat Morning service, 5 are referenced: *Ein kamokha* by Sulzer; *L'kha Adoshem hagg'dulah* by Ephros; *Eits hayyim* by Hugo Ch. Adler and A. M. Rothmueller; and *Hashiveinu* by Dunjewski. However, relative to the choral repertoire in the Eastern European synagogue, even as

recalled by this writer, these selections are far too little to impart to the reader the true scope of the choral dimension as it existed. Particularly in view of the fact that the Ephros volumes are cited so routinely throughout the *Sefer Hadrakhah*, one wonders why no other references are made from them, at least, for choral compositions for Shabbat.

When synagogue music flourished, choral settings were sung for a majority of the prayer texts. In both West Central and Eastern European synagogues, choral settings for *L'khah dodi* and *Adoshem malakh* (Psalm 93) were created in profusion, as well as for *Tov l'hodot* (Psalm 92) in West Central European synagogues. In Eastern Europe, extant *partitura* collections reveal highly numerous settings of *Ahavat olam*, *Hashkiveinu*, *V'sham'ru* and *Magein avot*. In the *S.H.* (p. 18), not only are there no references to any choral composition for *V'sham'ru*, but among the references for the *nusah*, even Katchko—also referenced practically routinely throughout the book—is omitted there. It so happens that Katchko, in *Otsar II*, p. 22, presents a model hazzanic example of *V'sham'ru*, in this instance even more so than Alter, who is referenced. Moreover, Katchko also includes on the same page in his *Otsar II* a model example of the *nusah* for merely the concluding words of the text, the omission of which leaves the reader of the *S.H.* with neither a musical example nor a referential source for that level of the *nusah*.

In the Eastern European synagogue, Shabbat Morning prayer texts typically sung by choir included at least *Mimm'kom'kha* (the composition of which by Avraham Berkowitz was cited above), *Ki mi-tsiyyon*, *L'kha Adoshem hagg'dulah* (for which Zeydl Rovner's composition was cited above), *Mi she-asah nissim* (on *Shabbat m'var'khim*), *Hodo al eretz*, *U-v'nuho yomar* and all four texts—with their responses—of the Musaf K'dushah: *Na'arits'kha*; *Kadosh/K'vodo*; *Barukh k'vod/Mimm'komo*; and *Sh'ma yisrael/Hu Elokeinu*. Many more were also sung, although not as routinely.

The same limited references to choral compositions is largely true of the coverage of Hallel in the *S.H.* There, however, three choral settings are cited in the referenced Ephros Volumes 3 and 4: *Mah ashiv* by Lewandowski and *Min ha-meitsar* by Halevy and Dunajewski. One can only wonder why the Nowakowski setting of *Adoshem z'kharanu* (in Ephros, Vol 3, p. 194) was bypassed. The Eastern European handwritten *partitura* collections, however, contain many settings of these and other texts of Hallel which once enriched and glorified the psalm texts as well as the occasions on which they were sung. These include *Hal'luyah*, *hal'lu avdei Adoshem*; *B'tseit yisrael*; *Adoshem z'kharanu*; *Ahavti*; and *Hal'lu et Adoshem kol goyim* (cited above), in addition, of course, to *Mah ashiv* and *Min hammeitsar*.

Various anomalies

The first *S'lihot* Service preceding Rosh Hashanah was formerly perceived as the beginning of the High Holiday season, not merely because of its liturgy, but because of the intensity of feelings it aroused within the masses of God-fearing Jews. As recalled by this writer in the time and place described at the beginning of this review, the sounds emanating from synagogues—to strolling passersby in the cool September evenings—of boys-and-men choirs rehearsing the seasonal liturgical compositions brought the feel of the approaching Days of Awe, as did the frequent playing on the *Yiddische Stunde* (“the Jewish Radio Hour”) of the 78-rpm recording of Hazzan Mordechai Hershman singing the once-famous rendition of *Sh'ma koleinu*. Similar feelings are described by the author in the *S.H.*: “... listening to Leib Glantz’s recording [of] ‘*S'lihot*’ 1958 ... reveals the formula for creating communal prayer-excitement ... offered by an inspired hazzan and knowledgeable *kahal*.” Indeed, this was the feeling engendered by synagogue *t'fillah* on special liturgical occasions generally, but with a unique quality characteristic of the first *S'lihot* service in particular. This quality was created by the uniqueness of this penitential occasion, its liturgy and the traditional intonation of it by hazzan and choir. Throngs filled the synagogues in anxious anticipation of sharing in the special experience of this midnight service, ushering in the new High Holiday season. One therefore wonders why the *S'lihot* service is placed in the *Sefer Hadrakhah* (pp. 205—12) after—rather than before—the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services.

The usual ongoing references throughout the *S.H.* to Alter, Katchko and Ephros (Vol. 2: *Yom Kippur* in this section) secure coverage of the *nusah* as well as traditionally hazzanic treatments of the liturgy in the *S'lihot* section, which are enhanced by the inclusion of 3 selections from the mentioned Glantz *S'lihot* service as well as the Zavel Zilberts setting of *B'motsa'ei m'nuhah* and the Isaac Kaminsky setting of *Sh'ma koleinu* in the High Holiday volume by Noah Schall. Choral settings are referenced for a number of the prayer texts traditionally sung by the choir at the *S'lihot* service. However, one text noticeably lacking is *L'khu n'ran'nah* within the *Shomei'a t'fillah* prayer. Another is the once-celebrated, highly inspirational composition of *Keil erekh appayim* by Baruch Schorr (*N'ginoth Baruch Schorr*, p. 10, no. 11), and still another is *T'vi'einu* (sometimes: *Havi'einu*) toward the end of *Z'khor rahamekha* immediately preceding *Sh'ma koleinu*. A choral setting by Gerowitsch (in Ephros Vol. 2, p. 111) for this text, however, is referred to in the *Erev Yom Kippur* service, but the choral singing of this text was more typical of the first *S'lihot* service than of *Erev Yom Kippur*. The primary reason is that the pre-Rosh

Hashanah *S'lihot* service consisted solely of *S'lihot* texts, and the *T'vi'einu/Havi'einu* passage was the concluding one preceding the opening of the Ark for *Sh'ma koleinu*. And inasmuch as the pre-Rosh Hashanah *S'lihot* service was the first occasion on which this text was included in the incoming High Holiday season, its choral intonation was particularly appealing and inspiring. On Yom Kippur, by contrast, other special *t'fillot* “competed,” as it were, with the *S'lihot* section within the various services, rendering somewhat less priority to the *T'vi'einu/Havi'einu* passage in those services.

Two departures from traditional norms also appear in the *S'lihot* section of the *S.H.*: The first is Ex. 11.3, p. 208, namely the rendition and *Zamru Lo* reference for the singing of *Adoshem, Adoshem*. In the published *S'lihot* services by Alter and Katchko and all Eastern European *hazzanim* generally, there is no musical setting for the *Sh'losh-esreih middot* at all. The only places where it was universally intoned during the High Holidays were at *Hotsa'at ha-sefer* immediately following *Vaihi binso'a... Ki mi-tsiyyon* and in the *piyyut* (liturgical poem) in *Neilah* which begins with that text.

Similarly, the references for the *Viddui*-mode singing of *Ashamnu* in the pre-Rosh Hashanah *S'lihot* service in the *S.H.* (p. 211) are from their inclusion in Yom Kippur services. However, in no Ashkenazic tradition, West Central or Eastern European was *Ashamnu* sung in that service at all. Baer, for example, states on p. 69 (under *S'lihot kodem rosh ha-shanah l'yom ris-hon*): *Oschamnu leise gebetet* (“*Ashamnu* [is] recited in an undertone”). Its *Viddui*-mode intonation was traditionally reserved exclusively for Yom Kippur Evening and Day services. Such distinctions in the usages of special *nusahim* evolved precisely to highlight their significance on specific liturgical occasions through their deliberate exclusion on others. Loss of this subtlety in relatively recent decades — in addition to innumerable others — has resulted only from the pressure to create ever more opportunities for congregational singing.

The *Sefer Hadrakhah* presumes and encourages improvisation of a number of segments of the liturgy based upon the general templates given for a particular *nusah*. However, all general *nusah* templates in the *S.H.* provide nothing beyond pitch content. In Kwartin's previously mentioned autobiography, he tells of hearing four *ba'alei t'fillah* in his youth as well of visiting *hazzanim* with their choirs, and mentions especially their boy soloists, all of whom made lifelong impressions on him through their strongly impassioned intonations which reflected the thousand-year Jewish suffering from continuous persecution. Kwartin also speaks of the role of God-fearing parents, of learning and absorbing as a child in *kheyder* the fear of heaven, the awe of a higher being, and identification with the harsh plight of Jews historically. He concludes:

It must therefore be emphasized that a hazzan who did not absorb in childhood this kind of background and who has never heard the local pious, God-fearing *ba'al t'fillah* pour out his embittered heart at the *amud* in a veritable sea of tears on the Days of Awe cannot truly feel his exalted calling, and does not really understand before Whom he stands.

From these words, it is clear that the mere following of a template consisting solely of a scale- or mode-basis, pausal points and a few characteristic motives cannot effectively reproduce a *nusah* which grew precisely out of the type of environment described by Kwartin. Therefore, precisely because of contemporary circumstances, instead of encouraging improvisation at an early stage, it is far better to provide the reader with a structured selection of specific renditions which can simulate as effectively as possible the improvisations of a hazzan from the background described. Textual interpretation of the words should of course be emphasized, as well as the significance of their content to the liturgical occasion, all in light of cumulated Jewish historical experience. Without conscious attention to these factors, rendition based on pitch content alone produces no more than what amounts to a body stripped of its soul. Only after having thoroughly learned and internalized the “feel” of a *nusah* should improvisation be considered, and even then only by gifted individuals capable of doing it justice.

A qualified recommendation

Finally, a word on the practical usage of *Sefer Hadrakhah*: The serious reader will need to physically gather the various sources referred to—1 to 8 volumes—for each separate prayer text, provided they are owned or at least available, and will require rigorous discipline and integrity to do so.

The reader who will opt to merely select randomly from the bulleted references will be faced with the problem that the commentary, with little exception, offers no information on the purpose of the various examples other than that stated in the Preface, of providing references “for cantorial solos or variants of the *nusah ha-t'fillah*.” However, when looking through the list of bulleted references, no information is given as to whether a reference is intended as a reinforcement of the given *nusah*, or whether it is a variant, and if so, the nature of the variance. Is it a totally different *nusah*? Does it involve hazzanic stunts—momentarily extrinsic to the *nusah* under consideration—as pointed out earlier in examples by Alter? Is it a shorter or longer conclusion of a prayer text? Is it for hazzan, or for choir? Or is it an extended hazzanic recitative (“solo”), and if so, what is the nature of its individuality? Moreover,

unless the composer or compiler is the composer of a bulleted reference, one cannot even know the identity of the composer without locating it manually.

The reader who will opt for the path of least resistance and rely only on the musical examples in the *S.H.* will have no choice but to improvise the highly numerous texts for which no musical examples are given, as well as the sections of prayer texts not covered in the many partially notated examples. This necessity will obviously incur the above-mentioned problems involved with improvisation. Moreover, in view of the vast subject the *S.H.* aims to represent, the scope of the musical examples in the book is relatively limited. Therefore, dependence on those examples alone would probably result only in mediocrity.

Despite all that has been pointed out above, it would be unfair as well as remiss to fail to acknowledge and emphasize the abundance of decades-long accumulated scholarly information which pours forth throughout the pages of the *Sefer Hadrakhah*. As mentioned at the beginning of this review, this includes detailed definitions of many *nusahim* and innumerable details concerning liturgical practice and tradition, the coverage of which is decidedly thorough and excellent. The book is also an immensely valuable source for references to numerous felicitous hazzanic and choral selections, and particularly since it covers the entire liturgical year within a single 330-page volume, it is a most valuable as well as handy reference work for students as well as professionals in all mentioned areas.

From the perspective of this writer, however, above and beyond all other issues concerning the *Sefer Hadrakhah* addressed above, the single most lamentable is the treatment of congregational singing. As a fact of life in the 21st century, congregational singing is a subject which needs to be addressed in classes for aspiring *hazzanim*. In a book which aspires to emulate the *Baal T'fillah* in updated form, however, congregational singing—as it has mushroomed out of control, particularly in recent decades—has no rightful place in it. Treating it as an integral part of *nusah ha-t'fillah*, however, amounts to an attempted fusion of two worlds in which the primary concerns of one clashes with those of the other. One, the time-hallowed older tradition, aspires toward addressing the Almighty *b'hadrat kodesh* (“in the beauty of holiness” [Psalm 29:2]), with intense devotion and adherence to *nusah* through heartfelt interpretation of the prayer texts, some supplicatory, others glorifying, meditational or mystical—or whichever sentiment the text and liturgical occasion inspires—all in an ambience of holiness. The second, the current trend, whose primary goal is formed by the ever weakening feeling for the first, continually agitates for more congregational participation

through the singing of prayer texts regardless of their traditional functional domain (hazzanic or congregational), regardless of their appropriateness for the sacred texts upon which they are thrust, and regardless of the *nusahim* and inspirational settings of the sacred texts they displace.

The fact is that by comparison with the traditional hazzanic recitative or choral composition, even the most innocuous of congregational melodies compromises and dilutes the dignity, subtlety and depth of textual interpretation and associated ambience—in a word, the level of holiness once conveyed by the older tradition. Such compromise and dilution only become exacerbated through the ever-pressing demand for more tunes of “light,” and as often stipulated, “fun” character. Hence the attempted fusion of both these philosophically opposite worlds as a single “Application of *Nusah hatefillah Beminhag Ashkenaz*” is, in the view of this writer, aberrational, because the time-hallowed musical-liturgical tradition and its lofty assumptions are far too profound, sublime and great to be associated with—let alone on a par with—the diluted, popularized alternative, which the *Sefer Hadrakhah* implicitly legitimizes by presenting it as integral to the time-hallowed tradition.

A respected cantor, composer, teacher and scholar, Sholom Kalib currently devotes all his available time and energy to “The Sabbath Morning Service”—the third in a five-volume project—The Musical Tradition of the Eastern European Synagogue. Volume One, “Introduction—History and Definition,” and Volume Two, “The Weekday Service,” appeared in 2002 and 2005, respectively, each in several parts. Both volumes were greeted with critical acclaim (“... a job for an entire university department—or at least several professors and a raft of much-abused graduate students,” wrote Alexander Gelfand in FORWARD, December 2, 2005). The Journal wishes to thank Dr. Kalib for graciously agreeing to write the above review/essay in honor of his distinguished friend and colleague, Hazzan Charles Davidson.

Geoffrey Shisler's *Shiru Lo Shir Chadash*: Original Compositions for Shabbat, Holy Days and Other Occasions, with 2 accompanying CDs
Edited by Cantor Arie Subar, and Stephen Glass
Council of Hazzanim of Greater Montreal, 2009
Reviewed by Sam Weiss

Geoffrey Shisler has had a long and varied hazzanic and rabbinic career in Great Britain. He has also been a passionate teacher and colorful spokesman for the art of traditional synagogue music, and *Shiru Lo Shir Chadash* is the first published collection of his liturgical compositions. The meticulous production of this handsome book and double-CD set is a labor of love by a number of Montreal *hazzanim* along with Montreal pianist and arranger Stephen Glass, a colleague and student of Shisler's from "the old country."

Glass, who is the music director of Montreal's Shaar Hashomayim congregation, accompanies its hazzan Gideon Zelermyer on the recordings. Glass also notated the chord symbols of his elegant harmonies for the book. Since he changes chords on virtually every beat of the measure, these symbols are an interesting study in and of themselves. The melody lines and lyrics are beautifully engraved, and complete Hebrew texts precede all the selections. Noteworthy is the novel presentation of the English translations, which are printed in complete short phrases above the music rather than word-by-word below the lyrics. A singer who is unfamiliar with the Hebrew text can thus quickly scan the meaning of an upcoming passage before singing it, instead of figuring it out after singing it. An index of the generous spirit evident in this book's production is the fact that every chorus is fully notated, with virtually no repeat signs. The recordings, however, usually do not repeat choruses that are easily construed from the music; but when word placement alters the repeated music in any way, the passage is sung again with the new words.

The precision of the notation notwithstanding, we are surprisingly never given any tempo indications or other performance suggestions. The editors' decision to supply this information only aurally via the recordings will unfortunately leave many a singer to his or her own devices. A case in point are the two versions of *Adon Olam*, both of which have entirely different characters depending on their tempi. The pervasive ♩ ♪♪♪ rhythm of the first one implied a dance tempo to me, while the ♩³ triplets throughout the second version suggested the more relaxed triple-time typical of the rest of

Shiru Lo Shir Chadash. It turned out that I had guessed the composer's intentions incorrectly—or at least guessed them differently from the performers' interpretation on the CDs.

The book concentrates on prayers from the Shabbat and Festival morning services, plus a few texts from the High Holidays and *z'mirot*. The "*Chadash*" in *Shiru Lo Shir Chadash* can apply not only to new musical settings but also to imaginative choices for which liturgical texts to set, e.g., *R'tseih v'ha^uhalitseinu* (from the Birkat Hamazon) and the four selections grouped under the category of "Music For Children" (They are *Yishtabah*, *Eil Baruch G'dol Dei'ah*, *Ashrei*, and *Leil Baruch*). These four songs are musically no different from the majority of the pieces in the collection; the "Children" category is merely a placeholder for songs without a synagogal liturgical rubric. Indeed, these pieces could very well have found a home in the last small category called "Other Pieces," which contain a choral *V'hu Rachum* and a complete setting of the Hanukkah lighting ceremony.

The 59 selections—all of which are heard at least in part on the recordings—are actually at most 52 distinct compositions and seven variants. These include versions for duet or choir, alternate harmonic versions of *Yism'chu* in minor and *Freygish*, as well as a supplemental version of *Adon Olam* with no repeated words. I say "at most" 52 distinct compositions because many of the pieces lack a distinctive melodic character of their own but are somewhat derivative of each other. While Shisler most obviously presents a theme-and-variations in his two sets of *Yism'chu*, several other compositions, like the two versions of *Ki Lekach Tov* and the three versions of *Na'aritzcha*, sound like musical exercises awaiting a composer's final decision. The *Na'aritzcha*, *K'vodo* and *Mimkomo* sub-sections of the Kedushah have a certain mix-and-match quality that seems to invite the hazzan to make his own choices among them.

The bulk of the compositions are in gentle triple meter (even some of the duple-meter songs have triplet undercurrents) and a majority of them are in major keys. This sonority, combined with the restrained—though refined and beautiful—singing of Hazzan Zelmeyer, gives the collection a decidedly continental sound. Fully cognizant of the very subjective and marginally relevant nature of such judgments, I will say that to my ears the first third of the work leaned more in the direction of the salon than the *shul*; only at selection #18—a cantorial *Sh'ma Yisrael* of the Musaf Kedushah—were my ethnic heartstrings finally tugged at.

While the author's *yiddishe neshomeh* is evinced in a number of other pieces from Hallel onwards, such passages usually have a cantorial rubato flavor;

rarely do the rhythmic settings, which constitute the core of this work, sound unambiguously Jewish. One welcome exception is Shisler's charming setting of *Geshem*. Although its six verses are all in the same triple rhythm and in the same key, the *Geshem* is actually beautifully through-composed with thoughtful word-painting. The return of the opening melody in the final verse is very well conceived. Adding a ritornello for the congregational refrain *Ba'avuro Al Timna Mayim* would have rounded out the structure of this composition and made it *prêt-à-porter* for the synagogue service. A good musical idea for such a refrain would have been the composer's own clearly congregational tune in *Hoshanot for Shabbat* that appears a few pages on. It is in 4/4 time and would provide a welcome change from the six verses in 3/4 time.

When singling out one of the tunes in *Shiru Lo Shir Chadash* as "clearly congregational," I mean to point out that most of them are not written for that purpose. The simplicity and even predictability of most of the tunes notwithstanding, there are enough leaps, arpeggios, chromatic passing tones, and other soloistic figurations to remove this work as a whole from the rubric of Congregational Melodies. The few pieces arranged for hazzan and men's choir by Stephen Glass give further testimony to the basic tenor of the collection. Even those melodies that might be sung by a group are better suited to a unison chorus than to a typical congregation.

The resourceful hazzan, nevertheless, can certainly use or modify some of these lyrical synagogue pieces as congregational melodies that lie clearly on the other side of the Shlomo Carlebach-Debbie Friedman musical divide. If not as congregational melodies, then how best to utilize these new cantabile liturgical settings that Geoffrey Shisler has composed? The way Hazzan/Rav Shisler himself probably has done in the synagogues he has served: as solo material that contrasts nicely with *nusah* or *hazzanut* and is ingratiating to the congregation without necessarily inviting it to join along. This certainly represents a valuable contribution to the working hazzan's musical arsenal. But even beyond such utilitarian purposes, *Shiru Lo Shir Chadash* is a marvelous work that offers us a glimpse into the musical heart of a rabbi who remains a devoted hazzan. It is a heart that dances at every liturgical opportunity, inspiring us all.

Sam Weiss, hazzan at the Jewish Community Center of Paramus, NJ, is a recitalist, lecturer and Jewish Music consultant in the fields of liturgical, Yiddish and Hasidic song. A frequent contributor to the Journal of Synagogue Music and a member of its Editorial Board, his review, "Zamru Lo III—The Next Generation—For Hallel, Shalosh R'galim and the Weekdays," appeared in the Fall 2009 issue.

Joey Weisenberger's *Building Singing Communities: A Practical Guide to Unlocking the Power of Music in Jewish Prayer*, with a Foreword by Rabbi Elie Kaunfer, 2011; a Publication of Mechon Hadar's Minyan Project
Reviewed by Shoshana Brown

This book, launched together with an accompanying CD (*Joey's Nigunim: Spontaneous Jewish Choir*) which is sold separately, is timely and much-needed. To use it, however, you have to be willing to take a plunge, for Weisenberg—Music Director at the Kane Street Synagogue in Brooklyn, NY and Music Faculty member at Yeshivat Hadar in Manhattan—describes a vision of synagogue-singing/praying that most of us have never witnessed. I had heard Weisenberg give a presentation at an Independent Minyan Conference, and so, was not surprised at what he describes in his book. But I suspect that neither hearing nor reading *about* it can give one a true grasp of what it's like.

One probably needs to attend either a service at his synagogue or a class at his Yeshiva in order to understand the essence of his approach:

...every congregation that aims to take its singing energy to the next level must develop a core group of singers who stand close together, directly surrounding the *ba'al t'fillah*. I like to call this group the "Spontaneous Jewish Choir" and its participants "musical gabba'im. But this singing core is not a new idea at all. In many ways, it's actually a return to a centuries-old synagogue practice whereby choristers (*m'shor'rim*) would stand near the hazzan to sing spontaneous harmonized responses.

Yes, I had heard of *m'shor'rim* (and seen them on Youtube), but Weisenberg is not really endorsing a return this late medieval set-up. We are not talking about a handful of grown men with a sprinkling of young boys here. We are talking about a much larger group of adult layfolk, men and women, clustered around the *sh'liach tsibbur* at a floor-level, centralized prayer *amud* (he stresses the importance of not having prayer led from a frontal, raised *bimah*) for the duration of the service—who would support the prayer-leader's singing, and simultaneously take their cues from him/her—and *most importantly*, encourage lustier singing/davening from the rest of the congregation. At least that's the best I can figure it out from Weisenberg's self-described "manifesto."

Here too, there is a caveat for anyone teaching the "spontaneous singing choir" a congregational melody in preparation for an actual service. Weisenberg's well-taken advice is to avoid introducing harmonies until people have

mastered the tune by singing it together in unison some 30 times. Once they really know it, harmonies will develop on their own.

The centralized-*amud* concept also raises certain logistical questions and may require some reconstruction of our sanctuaries. (In my home shul we do have a floor-level *amud*, but there is no room there for such a large singing-group crowding around it for most of the service). It is also difficult to understand the logistics of this arrangement. Do all the “spontaneous choir” members remain standing the whole time the hazzan is davening? Are we meant to hear the *sh’lich tsibbur’s* voice above the crowd as the distinct leader, or are all these folks, in a sense, “leading”? Once the congregation is able to carry a particular melody, can the hazzan harmonize with them?

These are just some of the questions that are bound to arise in readers’ minds as they try to imagine putting Weisenberg’s ideas into practice. It is beyond question today that increased participation and enthusiasm by members of the congregation during a service is the sine qua non of their engagement in prayer; it will also enhance their ease with the language of *t’fillah*. But what about the “ease” of the prayer leader? Will the hazzan feel comfortable with so many people hemming him/her in so closely, awaiting their cue for the next congregational melody? How will the rest of the congregation feel if they cannot see—and possibly be unable to hear—him/her? Might the harmonies so overwhelm the melody line that some daveners would not be able to recognize what the basic tune of the prayer is?

Certainly a field trip to Joey’s *kahal* in Brooklyn, or to Mechon Hadar in Manhattan, might help one to understand how all this works. Most of our congregants have not yet attained the same level of Jewish knowledge and engagement as Joey Weisenberg’s regular worshipers or students. It strikes me that just as he came to his methods in an organic way while leading/teaching worship, so too, his readers might have to discover through their own process of trial and error exactly which of his suggestions will work most effectively for them—and perhaps along the way develop additional methods of their own. I vividly remember Craig Taubman’s visit to the CA convention in Los Angeles a number of years ago. He did not have his whole band; it was just Craig and his guitar, and still he had the whole room in the palm of his hand, singing with fervor. Afterwards one of the cantors asked him, “But what do I do about the fact that I am not you?” Taubman answered: “You are not supposed to be Craig Taubman. You have to be the you that God meant you to be!”

Indeed, those who share Joey’s goal of taking their people’s “singing energy to the next level” will ultimately have to find their own ways to achieve it. With a willingness to experiment (and with support from the rabbi and

synagogue lay leadership), perhaps Weisenberg's recipes will work better than most of us can imagine. Yet, it might also be prudent to gradually feel our way in developing a "spontaneous Jewish choir" as we discover what seems "right" to the rest of the congregation whose leadership in prayer is our responsibility. (It is worth noting that at Kane Street this more intensely participatory approach to davening was first developed in an alternate minyan before gradually entering the main service.)

Weisenberg includes many other "recipes for success" in his slim book, including tips for how to learn and retain a new melody and how to teach it to others. His suggestions for a novice *ba'al t'fillah* in how to lead services are excellent, and chapters on "Politics and Diplomacy" and "Expanding the Musical Culture of the Community" are indispensable for our brave new world.

I greatly enjoyed listening to the companion CD of Joey's *Nigunim*, (the author's spelling; all melodies composed by him as well), but I suspect that for many congregants, this kind of music would only be an acquired taste. Weisenberg's melodies gravitate towards the plaintive; even his faster ones share this quality. In that sense they resemble meditative hasidic *d'veikut nigunim*, particularly those of Lubavitch. I happen to be a fan of this musical genre, but I don't think the same is true for the American Jewish mainstream. Nonetheless, whether we choose to enrich our davening with Joey's melodies, with Debbie Friedman's, Solomon Sulzer's, or Mizrahi *piyyutim* tunes, the aim is to bring enthusiastic congregational involvement to our *t'fillah b'tsibbur*.

Joey Weisenberg is doing his part in pointing the way—but he needs our help. And we need his. Buy the book. Read it. Listen to the CD. Then, with your *mitpall'lim*, take the plunge. Join the good fight to transform our synagogues into arenas of engagement and commitment, aided by the power of music to elevate our prayer as—more and more—we become "singing communities."

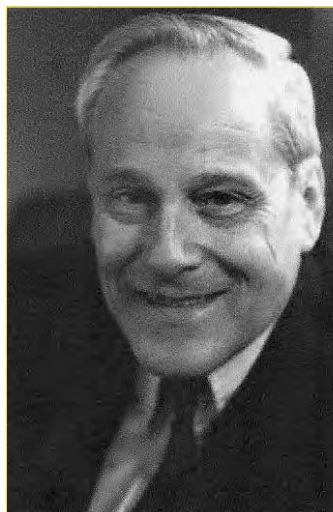
Shoshana Brown received her cantorial s'mikhah from the Alliance for Jewish Renewal in 2011. Her article, "Nothing New under the Sun: What's Still Wrong with our Synagogues?," appeared in JSM 2008; and her interview, "The Amidah and Atsilut: A Dialogue with Zalman Schachter-Shalomi," appeared in JSM 2009. She has served as hazzan or Jewish music teacher at Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative and Unaffiliated congregations, and currently resides in Huntington, New York.

Jack Gottlieb's *Funny, It Doesn't Sound Jewish: How Yiddish Songs and Synagogue Melodies Influenced Tin Pan Alley, Broadway, and Hollywood*, Albany, NY: State University of New York in association with The Library of Congress, 2004; + 1 digital sound disc

Reviewed by Judith Pinnolis, RIS Humanities Librarian at the Goldfarb Library, Brandeis University

Jack S. Gottlieb (1930-2011) studied composition with Aaron Copland and Max Helfman. He worked with Leonard Bernstein as his assistant at the New York Philharmonic from 1958 to 1966. Among his numerous compositions were the full-length service *Love Songs for the Sabbath* (1967), the opera *Tea Party* (1955), orchestral chamber music including the *Fantasy on High Holiday Themes for Cello* (1998), keyboard works for piano and works for organ including *Judge of the World* (1975) and *The Voice of the Lord in the Storm* (1985), along with a large number of vocal works. The Library of Congress chose Gottlieb's *Presidential Suite* for the website "I Hear America Singing" in 2002. Recent publications include *Songs of God Love*, and the CD *Monkey Biz'nis, A Musical Diversion in One Act*.

Gottlieb was a past president of the American Society for Jewish Music (1991-1997), and held jobs as music director of Temple Israel in St. Louis and was a composer-in-residence at HUC-JIR in New York from 1973-1975. From 1973-1977, he was the first full-time professor of music at the School of Sacred Music, Hebrew Union College. In 1977 he joined the [now called] Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc. as publications director, and served as consultant for the Bernstein estate. Among artists who have performed his works are Bernstein, members of the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra; singers Jennie Tourel, Adele Addison, Lee Venora and John Resrdon; the Gregg Smith Singers, as well as many other choral groups; and actresses Tovah Feldshuh and Felecia Montealegre.



This review first appeared on Judith Pinnoles' website, Jewish Music Web Center, January 1, 2006.

* * * *

Jack Gottlieb's mission was to set the record straight. He wished to clearly demonstrate through musical examples and technical musical means, that in fact, Jewish music from Yiddish song to synagogue melos, influenced American popular culture. This book could be a coffee table book, but it's more. It could be the written record of years of Gottlieb's programmatic material, but it's more than that. Or, it could be the text of a course on Jewish influences on popular song, but it's not quite that. It can be used as a broad reference work, and also has many elements of that. The book defies a neat characterization in terms of style, format and content, but has elements of each: an extensive, fascinating browse book, a music record with technical references, and a reference book with listings of hundreds of composers, lyricists, and songs of Jewish origin. The book is also political: it attempts to dispel the canard that Jews merely took advantage of or exploited African Americans, but rather shows that a true cultural exchange with mutual benefits and influences existed between the two minority groups.

Gottlieb claims that from that time to this, Jewish music has been inextricably linked to American music and vice versa. But exactly how? That is what this book lays out, in copious musical examples with score, diagram and theoretical explanation. Now, not every single example was as compelling or convincing as the others. There were some musical connections that seemed somewhat thin, but the majority of the examples seem to demonstrate the various points he makes. Those who do not wish to sit and follow the details of each and every musical example (although this writer did), may read through the text and listen to the accompanying CD and get the general effect of the musical argument. Indeed, many people may wish to read the book in order to know whether their favorite show tunes came from a Yiddish show or synagogue music! The book is not a history. It is arranged by organizing principles of language and various compositional methods or techniques for using Jewish musical elements, and as such, is somewhat disjointed and pointillistic at times. One jumps from example to example without much sense of the historic continuity. One reason for that may be that so many of the various ideas were happening concurrently.

Whether or not one agrees that each and every example of Jewish influence on a popular song is compelling, the evidence *in total* suggests that Gottlieb has won his thesis. Yes, many composers, especially Jewish ones, brought in elements of songs they knew or heard, consciously or unconsciously, onto the

American scene through their popular songs written in Tin Pan Alley or for Broadway, and later for movie scores. For some reason, one would presume this isn't a big revelation on the face of it. Many composers of other ethnic minorities did the same thing. One could easily say that Italian, Irish, English or French immigrants brought with them music from their European backgrounds and used it in America when writing music. It seems logical that the Jews would do the same, and had their fair share of cultural contributions. And so they did. The difference is, as Gottlieb realizes, unfortunately, it is currently very fashionable among some, to deny Jewish artistic contributions as either very little, light weight, or nonexistent. In regard to whether he proved the point that Jewish contributions were present, the evidence is overwhelming. In regard to whether these influences were substantial or significant in the total output of American popular song, is another question.

One could argue the reverse of Gottlieb's thesis. For example, if it's shown that Irving Berlin had even a few dozen songs influenced (or lifted) from Jewish sources, is that significant for a man who wrote over 800 songs? If Ira and George Gershwin had several pieces that were Jewishly influenced, they also had influences from African Americans. If Harold Arlen had songs reminiscent of Jewish song, he also wrote mainly in a mainstream idiom. This book proves important contributions, but percentages or numbers are not the issue. Gottlieb's point is that proving 'substantial' contribution is a matter of perspective. He shows that anyone who wants to understand the origins and early history of American musical theater or 20th-century American popular song, now needs to be able to recognize these Jewish influences *along with* those of other groups. They are all part of the whole and must be included (not to mention that so many of the composers of early Tin Pan Alley, Broadway and movies, themselves were Jews). Gottlieb is not leading a cheer or pep rally, or merely stating "ain't-we-great-because-there-were-so-many-Jews-who-did-this." He's looking at this body of music not only from the sociological or historic point of view, but from the inside out—from the linguistic and compositional views. He starts with the Yiddish [language itself which Jews brought to America from Eastern Europe via the waves of mass immigration at the turn of the 20th century. He shows how even the Jewish language greatly influenced, was part of, and forwarded the progress of song in America. Change to popular song in America started with the Yiddish language, and progressed from there through the genius of some of our greatest songwriters and composers who had the Jewish musical *taam* (taste) and sound in their ear.

The book can also be used for sheer fun, a kind of aural “who dunnit” game and wonderful puzzler. Gottlieb is also a self-proclaimed punner, and the book is full of good humor, *Yiddishkeit* (“Jewishness”), and entertaining anecdotes. A lot of people, even those unfamiliar with Yiddish, will derive tremendous delight and “get a kick” going through the songs, hearing the various songs of origin, and hearing the CD where the examples clearly outline some of the more easily recognizable Yiddish or synagogue tunes transformed into a popular song. Another interesting sidelight were some of the ironic anecdotes. For example, everyone knows how tightly Irving Berlin guarded the copyright on his music—yet he apparently didn’t seem to mind lifting music from others, including Yiddish theater composer Abraham Goldfaden.

Besides his demonstrated prodigious musical memory and keen ear, Gottlieb’s scholarship make the book a handy reference work. Appendix A lists composers, author, and performers alphabetically, with birth date, place, and death date and place. It gives Jewish and stage-or-changed American names. Appendix B lists, by time period, “Yinglish” (mixture of Yiddish and English) song titles. Appendix C gives musical example titles. This information on American-Jewish song is not organized nearly as thoroughly in any other book, to my knowledge. The Bibliography (pages 267-276) is extensive (and very worthwhile for students of American music or librarians). The CD tracks and texts are listed in the book, as well as an Index. In addition to all this, the CD has fascinating clips of rare recordings by legends of the stage, radio and film.

The book is highly recommended for college, conservatory and university libraries and would also make a good gift for your friend who is a popular-song or Broadway buff.

Michael Gerber's *Jazz Jews* Five Leaves Publications, 2009.

Reviewed by Jeffrey Nussbaum

Mike Gerber, a London-based journalist and life-long enthusiast of this musical genre, does a spectacular job in examining the influence and place of Jewish musicians in the world of jazz, a project almost a decade in the making. The study of Jewish musical identity has joined the ranks of other related studies, including, gender, sexual, and ethnic identities. However, it still lags behind others in scholarly research generally, and in this field in particular.

An interesting case in point is that of Jacques Fromental Halévy. His entry in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* mentions that he was a French composer, teacher and writer on music, and goes on to say: "His parents were Jewish." It seems clear that this statement is indicating that they were Jewish and he was not. Otherwise, why not simply write that he was a Jewish composer? Halévy wrote Jewish music for the synagogue and identified himself as a Jew. An informal viewing of many other entries of Jewish musicians reveals a similar bias. Jewish identity is either under-played or not mentioned at all. Gerber's book goes a long way towards rectifying that fault by unapologetically demonstrating the relevance of examining Jewish identity among world-class musicians in the popular field.

Gerber takes it for a fact that there exists substantial Jewish influence in jazz and its history. The most notable areas are in the creation of the jazz repertoire (the songs of the *Great American Song Book*) and activities of what he calls, "facilitators": concert promoters, impresarios, agents, A & R men, record producers, and club owners. He contends that even if there were hardly any Jewish jazz players, participators in the above two areas alone would warrant recognition of significant Jewish contributions to jazz and its history.

The truth is that Jewish jazz musicians abound. Gerber brings to light the Jewish identity of literally dozens and dozens of them. Many were expert and dependable players of 'journeyman' status, while others were influential improvisers and star performers. Aside from the obvious big names—Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, and George Gershwin— Gerber examines scores of other Jewish jazz musicians who might not commonly be identified as Jews. Among them are:

Herbie Mann, Lee Konitz, Lew Tabackin, Dave Schildkraut, Bobby Rosengarden, Lew Soloff, Larry Adler, Willie the Lion Smither (one of the few Black jazz musicians who adopted Judaism), Randy and Michael

Brecker, Steve Grossman, Dave Liebman, David Amram, Flora Purim, Herb Geller, Marty Gosz, Stan Getz, Serge Chaloff, Al Cohen, Terry Gibbs, Shelly Manne, Buddy Rich, Red Rodney, Joshua Redman (half-Jewish, raised by a Jewish mother), Fred Hersch, Loren Schoenberg, Lalo Schifrin, Shorty Rogers, Bernie Glow, Jane Ira Bloom, Paul Bley, Steve Gadd, Burton Greene, Chris Potter, Dave Douglas, Kenny Werner, Laurie Frink, Pam Fleing, Jeremy Steig, Perry Robinson (half-Jewish), Barry Altschul, Steve Lacy, and Sasha Distel.

Gerber also sets the record straight about musicians thought to have been Jewish, who were not. In particular, the Andrew sisters and Harry James, with their association with Jewish repertoire such as *Bei Mir Bistu Sheyn* and other klezmer influenced tunes, were often mistakenly identified as Jewish. To the above list, I would add important contributions made by Jewish jazz scholars and teachers. As jazz studies has become a vibrant academic field, further examination of the nature of jazz pedagogy and scholarship would undoubtedly prove fruitful.

Some of the musicians whom Gerber interviewed delved deeply into a self-analysis of their music and discovered fascinating Jewish influences. Jane Ira Bloom, for example, had the following to say about how her Jewishness influences the music she makes.

I would contend that identity actually goes beyond that of the individual. Jewish musicians may reject their own heritage or deny any Jewish influence. However, if they had lived in a Jewish milieu, even if they went on to reject their Jewish identity, some aspect of a Jewish influence can exist. The world-view and myriad range of attitudes from a Jewish milieu are present and at play regardless of whether the individual wants to acknowledge them or not.

Gerber's *Jazz Jews* goes a long way in supporting this view. He is also not shy about discussing anti-Semitism and reverse discrimination. It is comforting to note that these attitudes did not always play a large part in the experience of Jewish musicians as a whole.

Jazz is often cited as the great *American* art form, yet Gerber peers minutely into every nook and cranny of the globe where Jewish jazz musicians have been active. After surveying the American scene past-and-present in great detail, he presents a comprehensive survey of Jews' involvement in British jazz. This is followed by a discussion of Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, Russia, Hungary, Poland, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Brazil, Argentina, Canada, Australia, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Trinidad, Scandinavia, and Israel. He focuses particularly on the recent influx of excellent young Israeli jazz musicians into

the U.S. Nor is Asia overlooked, specifically, Jewish jazz activities in Tokyo, Japan and Shanghai, China.

While Gerber's list of Jewish jazz musicians is extensive and expertly researched, a few excellent and active musicians—such as Adam Birnbaum, Tardo Hammer, Dan Kaufman, Trudy Silver and Dan Tepfer—were not mentioned. Their inadvertent omission notwithstanding, I highly recommend this important work to jazz enthusiasts as well as to anyone interested in Jewish music and Jewish studies.

Jeffrey Nussbaum is President and founder of the Historic Brass Society and has long-standing research interest in Jewish music. He lives in New York City with his wife, the computer scientist, Joan Feigenbaum, and his son, Sam Baum, a budding jazz pianist.

Two OR-TAV publications in the Klezmer department

Reviewed by Jack Kessler

1) Yale Strom's *Dave Tarras, The King of Klezmer*

Klezmer, the 500-year-old celebration music of the Eastern European Jewish world, is a musical analogue to Yiddish, which some may consider a 'creole' sort-of language. That is to say, while well anchored in a core identity, it has always been in an osmotic relationship with other influences. So, too, the influences on klez have been many and varied. It had its origins in the musical modalities of synagogue chant. The scales of most klezmer music are easily recognized by hazzanim and anyone familiar with Ashkenazi nusah: *Freygish* (aka *Ahavah Rabbah*), *Adonai malakh*, *Mi she-beirakh* (aka Ukrainian Dorian) plus secondary scales such as the *Ler'n* (Study) mode with their typical motives and cadences, along with instrumental imitations of the vocal gestures of *hazzanut* (cantorial singing style). Indeed, one could posit that the entire klezmer 'tradition' is a celebrational, party-oriented, flip-side-of-the-coin of the more serious dimension of sacred song.

During the centuries of Eastern European Jewish settlement and development, the klezmer tradition was primarily influenced—in addition to its roots in synagogue nusah—by Slavic, Gypsy, Balkan, Greek and to some extent Turkish (and therefore Middle Eastern) music. The biggest single change and challenge came with the immigration to America around the end of the 19th century. Klezmer players were confronted by a huge range of totally new music: dixieland, jazz, swing, and other American popular music, plus new instrumentation such as piano and full drum set. Add to this novel mix a new and very practical consideration — the need to find work in clubs and theater pit bands. Klezmer musicians adjusted, or chose not to adjust, in different ways. Virtuoso clarinetist Naftule Brandwein, for instance, did not do crossover. He stuck to what he had learned in the old country and did that brilliantly.

Of the players that chose to go with the flow and let their imaginations open up to new influences, Dave Tarras stands out. He exemplifies the master klezmer musician of the first half or more of the twentieth century. He was a creative genius grounded in original European klez, who composed—and wrote down (a rarity among klez players)—a large repertoire of new klezmer pieces. He was a technically superb clarinetist and an active bandleader. His pioneering work incorporated American music, especially swing/jazz influence, into klezmer, set the stage and the standard, and defined the basic approach for klezmer musicians since then. Just about all the contemporary

professional ensembles like the Klezmatics, Greg Wall's Later Prophets, Klezwoods, Yid Vicious, and Klingon Klez (full disclosure: my band) and more, basically follow in his footsteps. As children of our times, growing up (if you can call it that) in the musical explosion of the late 20th century, we have been inspired to develop klezmer in the direction mapped out by Dave Tarras, blending the musical influences of our times with the language of klez. Many of the signature pieces of the above-named bands are their contemporary versions of Tarras' compositions. While Dave might feel somewhat less than complimented by having his name honored by folks using electric bass, electric violin, synthesizer patches, EWI (electronic wind instrument) and computer-controlled tracks, he essentially created and defined the game almost a hundred years ago.

Thus it was with great anticipation that I opened Yale Strom's study of this seminal figure. It is an easy-to-read, tremendously informative book about the career of Dave Tarras in America. What Strom has created is really more than just a biography of Tarras. He offers a panoramic picture of the world of klezmer musicians in the early 20th century as they adjusted to the new world, made do, and scrambled for work. The band business could be cut-throat, and Dave clearly had an ego the size of his talent. He could be hard to work with, but it was a hard business.

The book is deliciously put together. The 8 1/2" x 11" format allows for many pictures and an accessible page layout. The organization of subject material from paragraph to paragraph can be a bit scattershot, but it works fine if you're A.D.D., so I loved it. The occasional odd translation issues, I forgive. Overall, it's a very cool book. Especially enjoyable is the frequent inclusion of quotes from other musicians who worked the scene, either in Dave's bands or independently of him, plus lots of footnotes.

The second half of the book is a collection of 28 Tarras pieces. Interestingly, none of these pieces are, to my best recollection, in earlier-published collections of Tarras pieces. The *doinas* (freely improvised sections) are exquisitely complex enough to rival Moshe Koussevitzky's coloratura in his recorded prime, yet they are hard to "hear" when visually scanning the page even for a skilled reader. The best thing is to get original Tarras recordings and listen while reading the charts. A high level of technical virtuosity is needed to play this material. The rhythmic pieces are easier to get a feel for on paper, although some of them, e.g., the *Sarvers tants* (Waiter's Dance) were possibly designed just to shake us up. He wrote some of these pieces in the 1930s, but some of it is quite edgy, with a contemporary feel. There is an element in Tarras' work that reminds me of listening to Beethoven: it pulls me in and says: 'come here

now and listen to this!' It simply won't be taken for granted or allow itself to become background music like musical wallpaper at a cocktail hour. Did Tarras play cocktail hours? If he did, not with these charts!

Finally, the author lists an extensive bibliography of sources, which are of great value for anyone who wants to undertake a serious study of klezmer. There is also a comprehensive discography of Tarras recordings. Use of the original recording label names might make these hard to track down, but Google searches may prove helpful. Living Traditions could also help; there are Tarras compilations out there. I have some cassettes. One that I have yet to hear is *Cha Cha Cha, Live at Grossinger's* with Tito Puente, recorded in 1960. In sum, bravo to Yale Strom for his excellent work!

2) Emil Kroitor's 15 Klezmer Solos, Duos, and Trios

Emil Kroitor is an interesting musician. Much of his career took place in his native Moldavia, a small landlocked state in Eastern Europe, located between Romania to the West and Ukraine on its other three sides. He was extensively involved with folk orchestras in that country as composer, arranger, conductor and performer (accordion), and didn't move to Israel till 1993.

I Therefore began to study this collection of original work from the aspect of seeking an 'Ur-connection' to the old Moldavian style that is so fundamental to klezmer repertoire. While much of Kroitor's music is clearly traditional in that respect, some is surprisingly innovative. From the traditionalist angle, a lot of these tunes are solid dance numbers (remember, klez is party music). The style of repetition of simple phrases within sections is a good thing: it helps establish a dance groove. In terms of innovation, you will find some chromaticism, and occasional large intervallic leaps reminiscent of Dave Tarras' compositional style (see prior review of Yale Strom's book). The duets and trios are a useful addition to the literature. The vast majority of klezmer charts are single-melodic-line lead sheets, frequently without chords. There are very few multi-instrument arrangements available, and a band typically works out its own arrangements and harmonies.

The settings in this volume can be especially helpful for amateur (in the best sense of the word) klezmer ensembles that are just beginning to develop their own arrangements. Some of the arrangements are simply structured, with two voices playing the melody an octave or two octaves apart, with the third voice adding periodic fills. Others, like the duet *Me firt di kalleh* (The Bride Is Led in) have the second voice varying between playing parallel thirds

to playing an alternative melody. The selections are all clearly written, technically accessible to entry-level players and musically listenable.

The book comes with a CD, recorded by Kroitor's band. This is not a full-on studio 'art' product, and clearly was made to be part of the package for instructional purposes, so it is hard to judge how the band would sound live. I found the violin to be the most evocative of the instruments.

The collection is handsomely printed and comes with separate instrumental parts, ready for players to walk onstage and blow those tunes. Everything is in B flat, i.e., clarinet / sax / trumpet transposition. Anyone who reads 'concert', e.g., violin, flute, etc. may experience some frustration with this. However, when I contacted the publisher he graciously sent me a pdf of concert charts to make my reading easier. I recommend this collection as a worthwhile and useful resource, and commend its Israeli publisher, Or-Tav (www.ortav.com).

*Jack Kessler is a traditional hazzan who has stretched to composing-and-arranging music for, as well as leading, the progressive klezmer group **Klingon Klez** and the Middle-Eastern ensemble **Atzilut: Concerts for Peace** (Arab and Jewish musicians in a single ensemble). He also directs the Cantorial program of ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal.*

Music

A cappella Settings that Create an Aura of Openness

Hal'lu

Text: Psalms 117: 1
Hallel for Festivals

Music: Heard from Berele Chagy (1946)
Edited by: Charles Heller

Cantor **Freely**

Ha-l' - lu ha-l' lu et a-do - nai kol go-

Choir echo (Ha - l' - lu ha-l' - lu)

yim. Shab - b' - hu hu kol ha-um- mim,

(kol go - yim)

ha-l' - lu ki ga - var a lei nu

(kol ha-um-mim) (ha - l' - lu)

has - do ve - e - met a - do - nai l' - o -

(a - lei - nu has - do)

lam ha - l' - lu - yah.

(ha - l' - lu - yah.)

Eits hayyim

Text: Liturgy for Returning
the Torah Scroll
(After Proverbs & Lamentations)

Music: Abba Weisgal,
After Yugoslavian Folk Melody
Arranged by: William Milner

Majestically
mp

S
A
T
B

Eits hay-yim hi lam-ma-ha-zi-kim bah,

mp

5 *mf*

V'-tom-khe-ha m' - u - shar, d'-ra - khe-ka dar - khei no - am,

mf

9 *p* *mf* *pp*

v' - khol n' - ti - vo - te - ha sha - lom, sha - lom.

p *mf*

The musical score is written for four voices: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). It is in 6/8 time and consists of three systems of music. The first system (measures 1-4) is marked 'Majestically' and 'mp'. The second system (measures 5-8) is marked 'mf'. The third system (measures 9-12) features dynamic markings of 'p', 'mf', and 'pp'. The lyrics are in Hebrew, with some words in italics. The bass line provides a steady accompaniment with some melodic movement.

2 ^{mf} 13 Cantor

Ha - shi-vei - nu, a - do- nai, ei - le-kha v' - na - shu-vah, had - deish_

Hum Hum

18

ya - mei - nu, ya - mei - nu k' - ke - dem *Choir & Cong.*

had - deish_

22

ya - mei - nu, ya - mei - nu k' - ke - dem. A - men.

Kaddish Shaleim

Text: Daily Liturgy

Music: Arthur Yolkoff:

"for my Classmates at JTS, May 1959"

Cantor

Yit-gad - dal v' yit-kad- dash sh' - mei rab-ba__ b'-a - l' - ma di-v' ra

S
A Hum hum a - mein hum

T
B

khir-u-- teih__ v' yam-likh mal-khu - tei b' - hay-yei-khon u - v' -yo-mei - khon__ uv' - hay-

S
A hum

T
B

yei d' - khol beit yis-ra - eil ba - ga-la u-vis-man ka riv__ v' - im - ru

S
A hum

T
B

Choir *f* *ff*

S
A
T
T
B

a - mein. y' - hei shmeih ra-ba m' va - rakh l' - a - lam ul-al-mei al - may - ya yit -

f *ff*

S
A
T
B

ba - rakh. Hum

Yit-ba - rakh v' - yish-ta - bah v' - yit-pa - ar v' - yit-ro-mam v' - yit-na

S
A
T
B

sei v' - yit-had - dar v' - yit-a - leh v' - yit-hal - lal sh' - meih d' - kud - sha

S
A
T
B

L - eil - la min kol bir-kha - ta v' - shi - ra -

B'rich - hu hum

S ta tush-b'ha - ta v'ne-he-ma - ta da-a-mi-ran b'-a-l' - ma v'-im-ru

A hum

T

B

S Tit-kab - bal ts'-lo-t' hon u - va - u - t' - hon d' khol

A a - mein hum hum

T

B

S beit yis - ra - eil ko - dam a - vu-hon di vish-ma - ya v'-im - ru

A

T

B

S Y'-hei sh'la-ma ra-ba min sh'-may-ya v' hay-yim a - lei-nu v'al kol yis-ra-eil v'-

A a - mein hum

T

B

(Cantor)

im - ru — O - seh sha - lom — bim - ro - mav —

S
A
T
B

a - mein hum -

f

hu ya - a - seh sha - lom — a - lei - nu v' - al

S
A
T
B

kol yis-ra - eil — v' - im - ru

S
A
T
B

a - mein

Ya'aleh

Text: Liturgy for
Kol Nidre night

Music: Sholom Katz,
After a Roumanian *Doina*

1 Cantor

Ya - a - leh, ya - a - leh ya - a -

S
A
T
B

Hum... Hum...

6

- leh 1. tah - nu nei-nu mei - e - rev v' - ya - vo 1. shav - a - tei - nu mi - bo -
2. yish - ei - nu 2. to - ho rei - nu

Hum... Hum...

12

- ker, v' - ya - vo shav - a - tei - nu

bo - ker
pp

15

mi - bo - ker - v' - yei - ra - eh rin -
hin -

bo - ker
pp

18

nu - nei - nu ad a - rev, ad a - rev, v' - yei - ra - eh
nu - nei - nu

22

rin - nu - nei - nu ad a - rev, ad a - rev.
hin - nu - nei - nu

f

cresc.

Yih'yu l'ratson

Text: The Amidah

Music: Hashkivenu in
the Western Sephardic rite
Arrangement: J. Levine

With nobility

Yi - h' -yu l' -ra -tson im -rei fi v' - heg -yon li - bi__ l - fa - ne - kha a -
O - seh sha - lom bim-ro mav, hu ya -a-seh sha - lom a -

Yi - h' -yu l' -ra -tson im -rei fi v' - heg -yon li - bi__ l - fa -
O - seh sha - lom bim-ro mav hu ya -a- seh sha -

5

do - nai__ tsu - ri v' - go - a - li v' -
lei - - nu v' -al__ kol yis - ra - el v' -

ne - kha a - do - nai tsu - ri__ v' -
lom a - lei - nu v' - al kol yis - ra - el v' -

8

1. go - a - li;
im - ru
rit.

2. a - - - mein.
f

go - a - li a - - - mein.
im - ru



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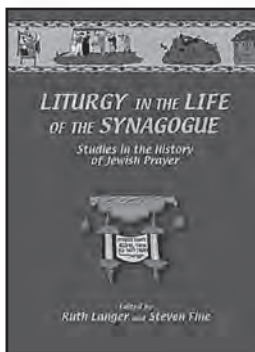
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